Week ending March 18 1950 Every Thursday Threepence

John Bull

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by Wilfred Pickles

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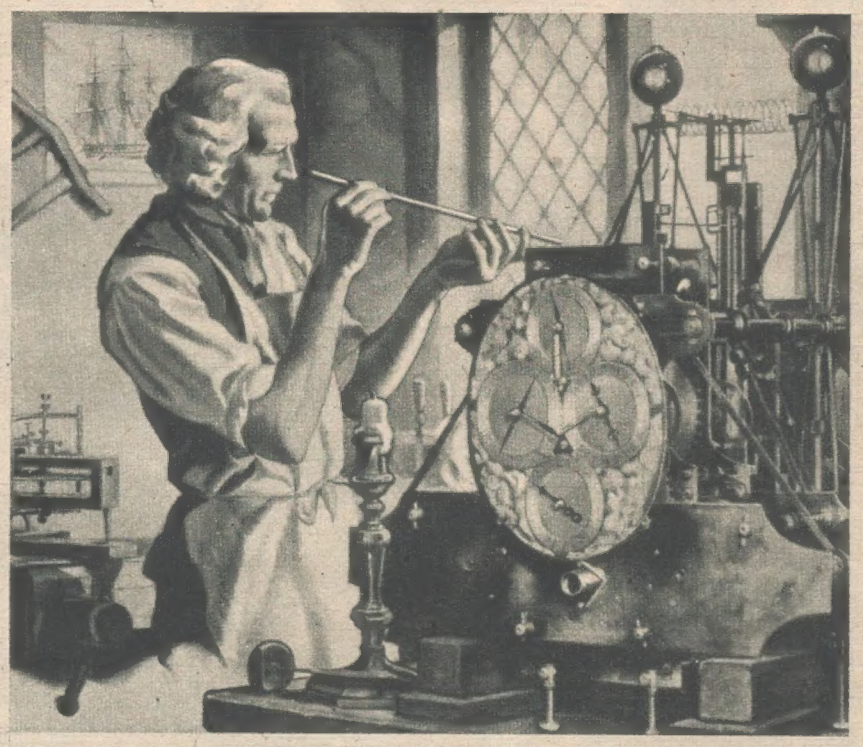
THE HAIR'S NATURAL FOOD

32



A 'landlubber' helped to build Britain's sea-power

UNTIL the 18th century, sailors could not calculate their position at sea with certainty, since they had no timepiece sufficiently accurate to enable them to fix longitude exactly. John Harrison — a Yorkshire carpenter who had never been to sea — set himself to wrestle with the problem. He produced his first model in 1736, and experimented for 25 more years, producing models smaller in size each time, till, in 1761, he produced a chronometer five inches in diameter. When Captain Cook sailed to the South Seas in 1771, he took with him a chronometer made on John Harrison's principles. Thus British vessels received their first satisfactory marine chronometer — an important contribution to the growth of British sea-power.

Today Britain can still call upon men of Harrison's perseverance and inventive skill—*and in these times Britain needs the best efforts of all of us.* The electricity industry is playing its part. Enormous efforts are being made to increase our supplies of electrical power. And at the same time new methods of applying this power will give us greater economy and efficiency in our factories and make our home lives more comfortable.

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E D I T O R I A L

Get to the roots of crime among youngsters

WE NOW KNOW THAT the so-called "postwar crime wave" was more than that. For it is still with us.

In 1945 and 1946 the idea was widely held that the crimes of violence disgracing all our big cities would diminish as lawless ex-soldiers, many of them deserters on the run, got used to being civilians again, and after the worst of them had been rounded up.

But by 1947, instead of dwindling, the crime wave was still at its height, with 4,408 crimes of violence and well over a hundred thousand cases of breaking and entering — both figures more than double prewar.

So it went on, and the authorities, now really alarmed, made great efforts to increase the strength of the police—then at least 12,000 men short of minimum needs.

Unfortunately, police pay and conditions have not since the war competed attractively with those of other occupations. The Oaksey Reports have brought some improvements but have not made a difference on the scale we need.

Evidently it is going to be a slow job raising the strength of the police to the figure required to deal with current crime—let alone to have a powerful influence on diminishing it permanently.

And in any case, after nearly five years of peace, we have to deal with something which goes far deeper than any mere spasm of restlessness caused by the war.

It is significant that so much 1950 crime is committed by boys and girls. Young gangsters commit assault after assault, robbery after robbery. They show a horrifying lack of regard for the age or sex of their victims. They perpetrate fearful brutalities for trivial prizes—whereas the adult professional criminal is very chary of using violence at all.

There is no economic reason for most of this juvenile crime. Almost any boy today can earn as much money as his father did in 1939, because there is always a big unsatisfied demand for teen-age labour.

But the pattern of life in an overcrowded urban community is too dull and artificial to keep adventurous-minded young people busy.

A routine mechanical job, regular meals, and the cinema, with sex and cigarettes on the side . . . otherwise cramped homes and the streets—can this be a healthy and adequate setting for energetic youths and girls sprung from a vigorous race?

The answer, obviously, is no!

And, unfortunately, the more enterprising young people are the ones most likely to rebel against their drab environment by first dabbling in crime, then plunging headlong into it—unless they are offered, before it is too late, some alternative outlets for their high spirits and craving for excitement.

Sport is one good answer. It might fairly be claimed that the National Playing Fields Association has in some places done more to reduce crime than all the police put together. But it is powerless to help in vast areas of London where there are no open spaces to exploit.

"There is not" — *The Times* recently reported—"one open grass space where a ball can be kicked in Islington, Finsbury or Holborn. Islington, with a population of more than 239,000, has only two football pitches, both gravel."

So there is more hope in the excellent work of the Federation of Boys' Clubs. Wherever it has been able to establish well-equipped clubs, there is today less gang trouble than elsewhere. The "tough guys" of young gangsterdom *can* be diverted from their criminal careers if offered something more constructive to do.

There is no better way of spending public money than on these clubs, to which the London County Council last year contributed over £40,000. It is a striking fact that a successful club can be maintained for no more than the cost of keeping two boys at an approved school!

Thus there are two ways, neither of them easy or rapid, of dealing with the growth of crime. One is the expansion of the police force so that offenders may be caught and corrected before it is too late.

The other is preventive. It consists of stopping crime at the roots by diminishing the number of recruits. Nothing will do that more effectively than the provision of more clubs, more playing fields, and a more satisfying life for youngsters than the streets of our big cities at present offer.

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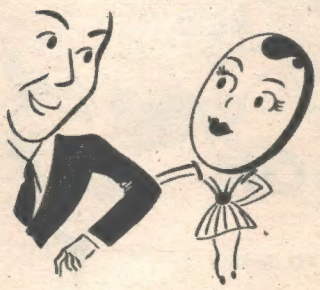
OH, GEORGE I DO FEEL LIKE A SILMOS LOLLIE!



What she really means is that she would like some *fruit drops at their best.*

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MARCH 18, 1950 VOL. 87 NO. 2281 PHONE: TEMPLE BAR 2468 GRAMS: HEROICALLY, WESTCENT, LONDON

FREE SPEECH

The waterless homes of our big cities

PERHAPS IT WILL surprise many readers to know that in a city such as Birmingham there are whole streets in which the houses have neither bathrooms nor running water. I am nearly seventy, yet if I need water I must draw it from a communal tap in a yard at the back of the house. My kitchen sink has no outlet, so I must scoop up the water and carry it to a drain outside.

There seems to be a perfect excuse for doing nothing about this: the property was condemned many years ago. But I see no reason to assume that it will be pulled down in my lifetime, so it looks as though I, too, am condemned—to go on living in a house without water in a city whose motto is "Forward."—WIDOW, Nechells, Birmingham.

No Colour In Church

CLERGYMEN complain that young people neglect the Church, but, if my experience is general, they have only themselves to blame. I am fifteen and have been a member of a church choir for four years. But, on a recent Sunday, when I was standing in the choir vestry ready to enter church, I was told by the choir warden that I could not go in as a chorister because he disapproved of the tartan shirt and yellow tie that I was wearing underneath my robe.

I do not like drab colours, but I do not interfere with people who do, and I had always thought of a church as a place for prayer, irrespective of what the worshippers are wearing.—CHORISTER, Edinburgh.

Eastern "Magic"

WHEN I was in India I saw the trick described in your letter "Magic in the East" ("Free Speech," February 25). The performer had a toy duck floating in a coconut shell, and the duck bobbed up and down to the music of a tom-tom. At the end, my husband gave him a rupee to be shown how it was done. A long black hair was attached to the duck through a hole in the coconut shell and joined to the tom-tom. By moving the tom-tom as it was beaten, the duck could be made to bob about and finally sink.—MRS. M. LUCAS, 38 Victoria Road, Crawley, Sussex.

Don't Rely On English

NOT quite three years ago, I left Scotland to join my husband in Brazil. The journey through France, North Africa and Rio de Janeiro took just a month. Although I could speak nothing but English, friends assured me that I could always find someone who could speak that language. But they were wrong. On the boat on which I came over, which was crowded with displaced persons of many nationalities, there was not one person who could understand English. And when I became ill the doctor was Chinese.

I now speak German and Portuguese fluently and my son, who is two, speaks English and Portuguese. Now that the school-leaving age has been raised at home, shouldn't the extra year be given over to language classes? — MARGARET MENZIES BILAN, rua Carlos von Kosertz, Purto Alegre, Rio Grande Do Sun, Brazil.

Cover Kids Nightmare

BEDTIME in the ward found one of the patients in tears over your cover picture of the pancake tossing (JOHN BULL, February 18). She was worried about the mother and the rest of the family roaring with laughter while the poor child was probably being burned by the hot pancake. I settled her down and the next morning, when I had discovered from the explanation inside the magazine that the pancake was quite cool and harmless, I took her in the joyful news. To my surprise, I was severely told off for not having pointed it out right away. She had had dreadful dreams about it all night.—NURSE, Sunderland.

Halt: Major Load Ahead

RONALD CLARK'S article, "Man Who Moves Giants" (JOHN BULL, February 18), was an interesting account of how the carrying of these huge loads is planned. But the best-laid plans can go wrong. When an R.A.F. launch was passing Gouroch, it failed to negotiate the roundabout at the main road junction. The road is not quite

level and, as the lorry turned, the launch, which had some water in the bilges, gave a lurch and the springs of the lorry collapsed. I took this snap just afterwards, while traffic was being diverted until repairs had been made. —MALCOLM MACGREGOR, 6 Chapel Street, Gourock, Renfrewshire.

How A Blind Man Dreams

HERE is the answer to the question about blind people's dreams, raised in the letter "Thoughts Of A Child" ("Free Speech," February 25). People who have always been blind tell me that they do not see in their dreams. Having never seen, they have no idea of vision. They act in their dreams without sight, as they do in ordinary life. I myself, who have been blind for thirteen years, see in my dreams as I did when I had my sight. — ALISTAIR GREWAR, 48 Crown Street, Inverness.

Certainly, Gospoice

VICTOR CANNING'S serial, *A Forest Of Eyes*, was of great interest to me because I was born in Jugoslavia and lived there for eighteen years. Dubrovnik is a beautiful place, exactly as he described it, but I do not think the police chief Zarko would address his countrywoman Franja as *Mademoiselle*. He would use the Jugoslav *Gospoice* (Miss). And it is unlikely that a waiter would use *Monsieur*. He would address a customer as *Gospodin* (Sir). —MRS. R. ETCHELLS, 50 Church View, Aveley, Purfleet, Essex.

JOHN BULL'S *new serial "The Murders in Godolphin Square," by David Frome, starts on page 7.*

Make Way For The Pram

WITH two children myself, I know how annoying it is trying to push a pram along a busy street where little groups of people are talking. I suggest fixing a bicycle bell to the pram handle.

It would only need a tinkle to have way made for you and it is better than continually saying "Excuse me" or "Hi, there."—MOTHER, Kent.

Lost Art Of Spending

IT seems that children nowadays don't know how to spend their money. They come into the shop and say "What have you got for sixpence?" or whatever they have to spend. Before the war, I don't remember children asking such a question. They always looked in the window first and came in with a definite request.—SHOPKEEPER, Durham.

Measuring Nylons

EDWARD HOGARTH'S article "How Nylons Are Born" (JOHN BULL, January 14) made me wonder how to compare the denier of nylons with the gauge, as I have recently received a pair of fifty-four gauge.—MISS JOAN GATENBY, 13 Eden Road, Grove Hill, Middlesbrough, Yorks.

There is no relation between denier and gauge. Denier is the thickness of the thread used—the lower the denier, the finer the stocking. The gauge is the number of needles to a specified length—the higher the gauge, the finer the stocking.

Unlucky Birthdays

FOLLOWING the letter, "The Best Time For A Child To Be Born" ("Free Speech," March 4), I asked if my son, who will be five in May, could start school after Easter. I was told there was room for forty more children in the school but he would have to wait until September, as only those who were five by April 19 could be taken at Easter.—PARENT, Margate.

John Bull welcomes readers' views, experiences and ideas for publication. A guinea is paid for every letter used. Mark the envelope "Free Speech" and make sure your full name and address is in the letter.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

FOR his first breath of real spring, cover artist William Edward Narraway went to Cornwall, where daffodil pickers are, at this time, busy gathering the year's outdoor harvest. Narraway lives in a village in Surrey and is famous for his paintings of rural life. Beginning a picture, he first makes a careful sketch of every feature in it ; then settles down to compose the complete painting.

"I ought to call her 'Grace'!"

"Short for 'Saving Grace,' I mean. This Ford of mine certainly saves me a packet of money!"

You'll hear the same sort of comment from every Ford-owner. It's easy to see *why* Ford-ownership takes the financial worries out of motoring. Reason One is low running costs. And reason Two covers a lot of things; you can best group them all together under Ford Service Facilities. Briefly, they mean that whenever your Ford needs attention, the job will be done so quickly, so efficiently, and so inexpensively as to astonish the average motorist. Yes, you certainly save on Ford motoring — in every direction.

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You need 1-1½ lb. fish fillets, 1½ lb. mashed potato (made with potato powder), 2 tablesps. parsley; one small onion, grated; 1 oz. margarine; 1 tablesp. Worcester Sauce; ½ teacup breadcrumbs.

Grease a 'Pyrex' brand casserole. Put in the potato, then fillets. Sprinkle parsley and onion on top. Dot with margarine, add Worcester Sauce, sprinkle on breadcrumbs. Cook in moderate oven for 35 minutes. (Kitchen-tested recipe.)

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Beginning a gripping new John Bull serial—the strange affair of . . .

THE MURDERS IN GODOLPHIN SQUARE

by DAVID FROME

ILLUSTRATED BY K. J. PETTS

McGrath said: "What happened to the girl? There was a girl here, wasn't there?" Mr. Pinkerton brightened. So that was it. He understood now

Dan McGrath came boldly, and he came to woo. Then he met Mr. Pinkerton—and things began to happen

IN THE QUIET GOLDEN HAZE that hung over Godolphin Square, there was a fragrance of burning leaves. It stirred a mute nostalgia in the heart of the little grey Welshman sitting under the plane trees on the dilapidated bench between a pile of forgotten rubble and the soot-grimed rhododendrons.

Mr. Evan Pinkerton did not really belong in Godolphin Square. It was still the exclusive West End of London, in spite of the sagging wooden fence that had replaced the iron railings, and the four bombed-out houses that made a broad gap between the chimney pots on the north side. On the south side the houses were as they had always been, simple and elegant, with only a few of them converted into exclusive service flats.

Mr. Pinkerton had come to one of them—No. 4 Godolphin Square—for two quite simple reasons. The first was that his own house in Golders Green had been bombed. The second was that No. 4 Godolphin Square was part of Pinkerton Estates, and so, curiously enough, was Mr. Pinkerton himself.

In fact, Mr. Pinkerton was Pinkerton Estates, although he still did not entirely believe it. It was as incredible to him as it was to everybody else, including Miss Violet Grimstead, the manager of No. 4 Godolphin Square.

She would never, of course, have put him in a maid's room on the third and top storey, to share a bath with the chef and the permanent valet, if she had had any idea of who he was. Miss Grimstead had taken a long look at the estate agent's order for a flat and free maintenance, when Mr. Pinkerton had timidly presented it, and a single very brisk one at the little man. Some impoverished hanger-on, Miss Grimstead had decided; a distant relative, no doubt.

But Mr. Pinkerton was happy enough on the third floor. It made him a little more confident that the late Mrs. Pinkerton, from whom he had inherited the Pinkerton Estates, would not suddenly materialize, wispy-haired and vinegary-cheeked, by the sheer force of the agony of seeing him squander her substance. Never having allowed him more than a sixpence at a time, even out of his own earnings, she would hardly care to see him rioting away her whole property.

But on the whole he was happier outside the house than in it. Down in the square he was at least out of range of Miss Violet Grimstead's managerial eye. The straggling rhododendrons also concealed him from the eternal scrutiny of Miss Caroline Winship, who sat all day at the window of her flat on the first floor, brooding over the ruins of her bombed-out house across

the square. He felt reasonably happy there on the dilapidated bench, and reasonably secure; and when it rained he could go to the cinema.

It had just stopped raining, which was lucky, or otherwise Mr. Pinkerton would not have been in the square to see Daniel McGrath.

That was something he would not have liked to miss. Daniel McGrath, coming resolutely, was in search of a dream, and no one in all London knew more about dreams than the little Welshman sitting there on the wooden bench behind the rhododendrons in Godolphin Square. He had two of his own.

One was Scotland Yard, in the tawny and stolid person of J. Humphrey Bull, his wife's former lodger in Golders Green, and now a chief inspector of the Criminal Investigation Department of the Metropolitan Police. The other was the cinema, where, on rainy days and in the least expensive seat available, Mr. Pinkerton sat with breathless enchantment, not untouched with envy, viewing the life and loves of those strange and fascinating people, the Americans. He knew more about them, their habits and their language, than they did themselves.

In the pale golden haze of the late autumn afternoon, Mr. Pinkerton was unaware that his two dreams were poised, in full bud, ready to burst into the most extraordinary fruition.

DANIEL MCGRATH came swinging along into Godolphin Square. Mr. Pinkerton saw him first as he turned to the left, glancing up at the house numbers. It was not until he reached the third house that he made a prompt about-face and started back towards the right and north side of the square. Having no business of his own and being inveterately curious about other people's, Mr. Pinkerton watched.

Even at some distance, he recognized that there was something peculiar about the young man in the square. He was a stranger, obviously, hunting for a particular house. Then, as he came nearer, Mr. Pinkerton straightened up on his bench, his watery grey eyes brightening behind his lozenge-shaped steel-rimmed spectacles. It was no wonder the young man looked peculiar; Mr. Pinkerton recognized the reason for it instantly. He was an American. It stood out all over him. His whole air was quite unmistakable—as at ease and at home as if he owned the entire place.

Not that Mr. Pinkerton regarded that as offensive, as some people did. Never having been truly at ease or at home in any part of the constricted universe he had moved in, it was the one thing that could stir a momentary envy in his timorous heart. Even Mrs. Pinkerton's last and unintended act of grace in leaving him the free and presumably sole arbiter of himself and some £75,000 in cash and property had been too late for him ever to feel free to call his soul his own.

Nevertheless, the sight of anybody young and untrodden-on, serene, calmly sure the world was a friendly and decent place and as much his as anybody else's, had an extraordinary effect on him; it lifted vicariously the colourless load of his inferiority.

He felt it now, watching Daniel McGrath coming along, looking up at the street numbers, and he sat boldly erect, ignoring the fact that the rhododendron branches no longer protected him from Miss Caroline Winship's brooding gaze.

The young man had come to an empty hole in the row of houses, two doors from Miss Winship's own. He stopped and looked ahead, then back again, as if shocked; as if a hole where a house had been was not part of what he had expected to find.

Mr. Pinkerton adjusted his spectacles and waited anxiously. The young man went back and looked up again at No. 19, then came on, almost running, it seemed to Mr. Pinkerton, his long legs covered the space so quickly.

Oh dear, Mr. Pinkerton thought suddenly. The house that he's hunting for isn't there any more; it's—it's destroyed. And he doesn't know it.

He got up from his bench. The young man had gone back again and was counting up once more, slowly, stopping to look about him, as if in a bewildered daze. If McGrath had been an Englishman, Mr. Pinkerton would never in the world have done what he did then.

He scurried across the garden to the flimsy gate in the wattle fence, opened it, and hurried along to where the young man was standing, looking over the four-foot wall erected to keep passers-by from plunging down into the ruins of what had been Miss Caroline Winship's basement-kitchen area. Ferns and the white silk seed pods of willow herb grew there now, sprung miraculously out of the brick and rubble.

Mr. Pinkerton looked over, too, glancing anxiously at the young man staring down into the area, his jaw tight, his lean figure motionless.

"Are—are you looking for somebody?" Mr. Pinkerton said it, and then had a sudden trembling agony of apprehension. The young man might resent people prying into his personal affairs. Mr. Pinkerton sidled a few steps away. The young man was turning his head slowly, like somebody struck a dull blow behind the ear. His frosty blue eyes, curiously light in a lean face suntanned the colour of juice from a green walnut, were blank and unseeing. Mr. Pinkerton retreated another step along the wall.

"I—I'm very sorry," he said hastily. "I didn't mean to intrude."

"Intrude? You're not intruding." The young man spoke like a bewildered automaton as his gaze turned back to the ruins of the house. His eyes travelled slowly up the graceful curve of the stone staircase that swept, fantastically supporting one weather-stained, pale-grey plastered wall rather than being supported by it, up to the transverse hall on the first floor, curving there at the end of the hall and sweeping on up, its delicate ornamental brass railing still intact, to the open sky.

OVER the transverse hall the roof still remained, to make it all look like some forgotten stage set, left standing when the play was over. A central chimney stood solidly intact behind it, the fireplaces with their carved roses and baskets of fruit and flowers protected from the weather, the faded peach damask still panelling the overmantel.

The young man turned his head slowly back to the little Welshman standing uncertainly and at a discreet distance from him.

"Is this No. 22 Godolphin Square?" His voice had a lost, unbelieving tone in it, as if he were awed and stricken and thoroughly sunk, as Mr. Pinkerton imagined he might put it.

"Yes. This is No. 22."

The American still spoke out of a bewildered fog. "What happened? Do you know what happened?"

Living at No. 4 Godolphin Square, Mr. Pinkerton knew only too well what had happened. A comparative latecomer, he had heard it, *ad infinitum, ad nauseum*, from both Miss Caroline Winship and her sister, Mrs. Scott Winship.

"Miss Caroline Winship's a very determined woman," he ended breathlessly. "She said no Germans would drive her out of the house into a shelter to catch pneumonia. Some people think she ought to have let her sister, Mrs. Scott Winship, go, even if she didn't care to go herself, because Mrs. Winship isn't so strong a character as Miss Caroline. Some people say that sitting up there all night, with the whole front of the house blasted in, made her even less strong-minded than she was. They didn't get out till morning, and even then Miss Caroline refused to go. She hung on to the banister and fought like a harpy before the police came and dragged her bodily down and out into the street. Oh, she's a one. She's . . . really a one."

Mr. Pinkerton blinked his eyes and adjusted his spectacles.

"Of course it was quite extraordinary. The other three houses, you can see, went completely down. Miss Winship's would have done, too, only her father had it shored up with those iron girders when he put central heating in before the 1914 war, Miss Caroline says. They used the hall chimney for the flue, and discovered the back part of the house was sagging, so that's when he had the supports put in."

He paused and looked up anxiously at the young man, whose mind and gaze seemed to have wandered back to the ruined walls, instead of focusing respectfully on the broad iron transverse support which had held up the hanging staircase.

The young man turned and looked at him. "What happened to the—the girl? There was a girl here, wasn't there?"

He did not seem too sure, but Mr. Pinkerton brightened up at once. Of course, he thought. This was it. The films should have taught him.

"Oh, you mean Mary Winship!" he said. "Oh, she's all right. She wasn't here. She——"

"She's . . . married, I suppose?"

"Oh, no," Mr. Pinkerton said hastily. "She's not married. I don't think her aunt would ever let——" He stopped instantly, realizing that that might be hardly a tactful thing for him to be saying. "I mean, I think her aunt and her mother sort of depend on her—perhaps more than they should, as a matter of fact," he finished hurriedly. But the young man did not seem much concerned with the two elder Winship ladies. A light had kindled somewhere in the depths of his blue eyes, making him seem a little less remote and slightly more tractable.

"You don't happen to know where they are now, do you?" he inquired casually.

"Certainly," Mr. Pinkerton said. "They live just over the square. At No. 4. They have the first-floor flats. Indeed, if you'll look over, you'll see her aunt, Miss Caroline Winship. She's always at the window. She's supposed to have bribed the gardener to cut off some of the branches so she could see across. It annoyed the other residents of the square. It's a service flat. I live there, too."

He had been suddenly disappointed at the off-hand fashion of the inquiry. It was as impersonal and disinterested as if the young American had an unpaid bill in his pocket and was instituting a routine inquiry as to the debtor's whereabouts.

Oh, dear, he thought. What if that was the case? What if he was just here to make trouble for everybody? He glanced quickly at the American. He was smiling a little as he turned and glanced across the garden in the direction Mr. Pinkerton had pointed when he said the Winships were at No. 4. Then he looked at Mr. Pinkerton again.

"Thanks," he said. He added slowly:

Continued on page 29

"David Frome"

THE author of *The Murders in Godolphin Square* is a dual personality. As David Frome, she has built up an international reputation as a master of subtle detective fiction (her books have been translated into nine languages)—and as Mrs. Zenith Brown, she manages to look after a husband, a daughter, a home and a farm. The farm, which has been in Mrs. Brown's family since 1800, is in Maryland, U.S.A., where she now lives. Evan Pinkerton, the mild little man of her invention, who introduces himself to John Bull readers this week, made his début in 1930 in *The Hammersmith Murders*.

Woman who tracks down shoplifters

by DON EVERITT

The thief does it all very casually. A brief look round, a pass of the hand and the booty is in the bag. But she makes one mistake. That innocent-looking housewife nearby has seen her—and she's the shop detective

IT WAS IN THE days of clothes rationing in a provincial store. The man who was hovering uncertainly around the shoe department noticed a woman by his side, handling a pair of shoes on display. She was plainly dressed and carried a worn, leather shopping bag half-full of foodstuffs. He spoke to her quietly. "Do you want a pair, lady?"

She turned in surprise. "Yes," she replied, inquiringly.

"If you go and wait outside I'll sell you a pair off the ration."

"No, thank you. I'll get them from the assistant."

Undeterred, the man quickly slipped the shoes from the stand, pushed them inside his coat and walked away. Out in the street he was overjoyed to see that the woman had followed him. "Changed your mind, eh? That makes it easier for me. Three quid——"

The woman quietly but firmly interrupted him. "Will you come back into the store with me—I believe you have some goods in your possession for which you've not paid?"

A Female Speciality

For his prospective customer, the thief had made the error of choosing a forty-five year old, dark-haired mother of two named Adèle Kirkham. In her eight years as a store detective that has been the only occasion on which a shoplifter has previously verbally notified Adèle Kirkham of his—or, more often, her—intentions. "No woman," she says, "would have been so stupid. But then, this is the woman's crime speciality. . . ."

Shoplifting is also currently one of Britain's major crime problems. Statistics for 1948—the latest issued—show a bigger comparative increase in shop thefts than in any other indictable crime. Known cases in 1947 totalled 18,723; in 1948 they hit an all-time high of 24,490. And there are strong indications that last year will break even that record.

Adèle Kirkham can usually spot a shoplifter before the theft. Her clues are the eyes and, sometimes, the hands. She explains: "Having decided what she's going to take, a shoplifter will first look around quite casually to see that no floorwalkers are nearby; then she'll watch the assistant until the right moment. Meanwhile, if possible, she'll also try to bring the article to the edge of the counter and screw it up small. What could be more suspicious than someone standing at a counter for two minutes or more with hardly a glance at the goods?"

As in most stores, the management rules that Adèle's first duty is to try to prevent the crime—by tipping off the salesgirl or by standing next to the budding thief. But in a five-floor building with four acres of floor space and, on the busy days favoured by shoplifters, some four thousand people constantly jostling in and out, such methods are rarely possible.

The Excuses They Give

Immediately the theft is made, Adèle has to tail the person. Not until they are out in the street is she allowed to accuse the thief.

"Inside the store," she says, "they can have all sorts of excuses, such as 'I was taking it to the door to see it in the daylight,' or 'the salesgirl was busy at the other end of the counter and I was taking it to her.' Some women have even said they were collecting all the things they wanted and were going to pay for them at one counter."

Occasionally a shoplifter will realize she is being followed and will try to shake Adèle off inside the store or get rid of the stolen goods. One woman, for instance, spent an hour dodging through various departments, then made prolonged visits to the restaurant and toilet and finally threw the gloves and stockings she had stolen into a counter gangway.

More experienced shoplifters are correspondingly more brazen at such times. They just drop the goods and deny ownership or go back to the counter and profusely apologize for absent - mindedly taking them — "after I've seen them make a smart lifting job. Believe me, this work calls for self-control."

"You've Got Nothing On Me"

To date, Adèle Kirkham has not once laid herself open to an action for wrongful arrest; but she has had some awkward moments. Not long ago, she brought back into the store an old woman who protested strongly that "you've got nothing on me."

Adèle recalls: "She had, in fact, got rid of some stockings without my seeing her. But I suspected that she might have been operating elsewhere that morning and I tried to call her bluff. She blithely opened her handbag and shopping bag again and I spotted a children's allowance book. At her age, I guessed she'd stolen it, so I grabbed it and rang the police. They told me she was wanted for half a dozen things—but I'd made another rather lucky mistake. The woman actually had a young family. The old age was a disguise."

A specially posed picture shows "thief" walking out wearing a stolen scarf. Adèle Kirkham has spotted tell-tale price tag and arrests her

The problem of wrongful arrest is even greater when shoplifters work in teams. The store detective has to be particularly careful that she accuses the person who is carrying the goods at that moment. The other week, one of Adèle's colleagues stopped two women for stealing underwear. One said indignantly that she had met her neighbour in the store and, when she was asked to carry the articles, she did not know they were stolen. "That story came apart," says Adèle, "when two bus tickets with consecutive numbers were found in one of their bags."

Among the articles most popular with shoplifters are those which do not need concealing, such as handbags, hats, gloves, umbrellas. This type of thief walks into the store without the article she intends to steal. If she is hatless she tries on some hats and, at the right moment, walks boldly out wearing the one she likes most. One day last summer, a woman tried to take a coat in this fashion.

Strangely enough, store managements regard the pickpocket as a far more serious menace than the shoplifter. "One hits replaceable stock, the other hits irreplaceable custom" is how one store manager puts it.

Some months back Adèle's boss called her into his office and worriedly told her that in the past few days he had received fourteen complaints from pickpocket victims. Large sums were involved and it was obvious that

the thief was an expert. Something had to be done. From the letters, Adèle was able to trace the majority of the thefts to the stocking and paper pattern departments. Later that same day, with a paper-packed wallet peeping from her shopping bag, she got herself firmly wedged among the stocking hunters.

After about fifteen minutes, she reached the counter. Nothing had happened. A little despondently, she began to choose a pair of semi-fashioneds. Then, just as she was thinking of giving it up for the day, she felt two sharp, rapid tugs on the wallet (it was firmly tied to the shopping bag). That was all.

Adèle didn't bat an eyelid. She bought her semi-fashioneds and left. From a counter a few yards away it did not take long to spot a smartly dressed young woman whose attention was far from the stockings.

"It was plain sailing from there on. She moved to the pattern department, sat down and stole a ten shilling note from a woman who had put her bag on the floor to look through a pattern book. Then she went to two other stores and lifted a purse and wallet. By which time I decided to rope her in."

She adds that when she got back to the store she discovered two plain-clothes policewomen patrolling the pattern and stocking counters. "They'd been there nearly all day—at the boss's request," she says. "I think that proves the need for specialized store detectives."

The smartest store thieves Mrs. Kirkham has yet encountered were a mother and son team who combined shoplifting and pocket picking.

When Adèle watched them operating on the jewellery counter, the son, who was in his twenties, completely shielded his mother on one side while she "admired" the goods. She picked up a brooch, murmured quite naturally "Oh, isn't that nice?" then put it down again, picked up another and, at the same time, neatly palmed the one she had just looked at. She repeated the procedure twice more, pausing once to get her handkerchief —"and unload her hand."

They then left for the pattern counter. There the son made things difficult again by wandering about to keep an eye open for individuals like Adèle. But, although she could not get close to the counter, Adèle managed to see the woman pull off one job. That was sufficient. Two things had made Adèle suspicious before all this began — "I had seen them coming and going quite a lot, but they never seemed to buy anything; and did you ever know any male, let alone a son, who was so keen on going shopping with a woman?"

Thieves Behind The Counter

Not all of a store detective's work is concerned with customers. In at least one in every ten cases, Adèle finds the thief behind the counter. And, because the staff knows her, Adèle finds this work requires far more cunning than any other.

Recently she had to employ a stooge to trap one assistant she suspected. "My daughter bought an article, gave the correct money and—as many people would—didn't wait for the receipt. I saw the assistant ring up 'No sale.' "

None of the staff is beyond suspicion. Some years ago a departmental head who had been extremely indignant about a thief among his salesgirls turned out to be working a large-scale racket himself. What first gave Adèle a clue occurred, she says, "during almost absent-minded observation. I saw him fetch a roll of silk from another department"—perfectly legitimate for senior employees — "but when the customer rejected it, instead of returning the roll, he pushed it under the counter."

More curious now, Adèle next noticed that a woman was paying almost daily visits to the department. It was his wife. A few days later—"they'd obviously been waiting for the right moment"—the roll of silk, all nicely parcelled, slid over the counter and into her basket. Nothing passed the other way.

"I was told that his wife had been visiting him regularly for months, so it was reasonable to assume that they had had a lot of stuff. I wanted to get them for as much as possible. I let a week pass; then I decided to take a chance. I went up to their house and told the wife that her husband had been found out. She fell for it. In the lounge they had enough cloth to fill the back seat of a taxi."

Another staff case gave Adèle one of her most nerve-wracking experiences. It happened when the perfumery storeroom became overstocked and boxes of expensive soap stacked outside began to disappear. She quickly narrowed down her suspicions to the cleaner—"a salesgirl would have taken a tablet at a time." The facts that he was a hefty six-footer and that he worked alone in the store in the early morning did not make her feel any too happy.

Anyhow, the next evening she settled down on a pile of rugs in another storeroom (equipped with a peephole) and lay through the night pondering how tough the cleaner would be. Six thirty a.m. came, and it brought him whistling down the corridor for his box of soap. Adèle had decided on shock tactics. In stockinged feet, she rushed out of the storeroom and collared him.

"He was never so scared in all his life," she recalls. "There I had been expecting a punch in the teeth—and he was as quiet as a lamb."

The daughter of a policeman, Adèle Kirkham spent the first eighteen years of her life sorely regretting that she was female, for her one ambition was to follow in father's footsteps. "They told me to become a policewoman," she says. "Could you imagine me wearing one of those hats? Heaven forbid."

Gradually, she became ninety-nine per cent reconciled to her fate. She married and had two daughters. Then, in 1942, she saw an advertisement for a store detective. Her old interest reawakened, she applied for the job, admitting that she had no experience. She was accepted. "I learned a few wrinkles from the local C.I.D. superintendent and—here I am, ambition achieved at last."

Salaries of store detectives range from £4 a week for a provincial trainee to £10 or more for a senior in a big city store. Mrs. Kirkham laughingly mentions that some people think she gets commission on each case; but the idea is not so far-fetched as she imagines. Detectives in at least one chain of stores get half-a-guinea or a guinea for most of their captures.

Why They Steal

Flaunting psychologists, Adèle Kirkham ruthlessly divides shoplifters into two main groups—those who steal to sell again and those who want something for nothing. "Very few," she says, "need to steal and even fewer are mental cases."

She is firmly convinced that some people try to get all the small necessities of life by thieving. She has caught women in the act of stealing such non-luxury items as toothpaste, cotton, dusters, soap, and knitting patterns.

In a year, Adèle has about seventy cases—fifty shoplifters, twenty pickpockets and staff thieves. She has caught people of all ages, types and classes: there were the two dear, motherly ladies whose bags were packed with loot; the schoolboys who had a stern lecture for stealing books; the woman in a black Indian lamb coat ("worth easily a couple of hundred") who haughtily denied stealing underwear and threatened to see the manager.

Her work has its hazards. In the past eight years she has chased thieves through busy city streets, had her hair pulled, been kicked, slapped, punched, scratched — and even bitten. Generalizing, she will tell you that little women are the most difficult to deal with and that men—of any size—come back into the store with her as meek and as mild as she could wish.

Immune To Tears Now

Very early in her career Mrs. Kirkham had a case which thereafter gave her a strong immunity to threats, pleas and bribes. "One afternoon," she recalls, "I stopped a plainly dressed woman who had taken some stockings. She nearly collapsed. She begged me to forgive her. She swore it was the first time she had done anything like that and promised never to do it again. With tears in her eyes, she told me she was a widow with five kids and had a job to make ends meet.

"Anyhow, I got her back into my office and told her to take it easy for a minute. I'd practically decided to let her go, but something told me to check with the police. Their answer floored me. She had a husband, no children, and a dozen previous convictions." THE END

One shop menace is the pickpocket. In the pattern department Adèle (left) demonstrates "closing-in" tactics

A special new John Bull series...

The most important things in life

by WILFRED PICKLES

The autobiography of Wilfred Pickles, first published in John Bull and now a best-selling book, brought the "Have a Go!" star into every reader's home—with all his warm humanity and genuine good humour. Now he begins a new short series of articles on things that really matter

1: WORK

IN THOSE SMOKY places where industry is thickest you can still hear folk saying that "the man who invented work ought to have stayed and finished it!"

I know from my own experience what they mean. I never could get excited about laying bricks; and I was so bored as a builder that I did more jobs the wrong way than any apprentice my father knew—or so he said!

There was the time when I had the job of laying roof-felting on top of a hut. It was in early autumn and I remember how I used to dash off every evening for rehearsals of an amateur play. I found myself thinking about entrances and exits when I ought to have been concerned about roofing.

Well, one of the first things building workers learn is to start felting at the gutter and work upwards, so that each strip overlaps the one below. I started at the top and worked down—and it rained in!

As I had blundered before, I agreed with my father when he waved a hand resignedly and said: "He's absolutely useless!"

YET only a few months later, when I was beginning to do the sort of work I really enjoyed and took a pride in, I was told by a friend that two producers had been heard talking in one of the corridors of Broadcasting House, Manchester, and one had said: "You ought to remember Pickles. He's useful."

For the first time in my life work became important to me. It was important, just as all work is, because of the sense of accomplishment—and because it was appreciated.

How I sympathize with boys who are persuaded to follow in father's footsteps against their own real choice!

About five years ago a cotton manufacturer whose father and grandfather had also spent their lives in his firm was telling me about his own lad, and how worried he was for his future. Being so thoroughly steeped in the business himself—he gets a real kick to this day out of standing across the road and looking at his name on the wall of the mill premises—the manufacturer was upset because his son wanted to be a doctor.

"What do doctors know about cotton—I ask you?" he said. I suggested: "Let the lad follow his own bent."

A few days back I met the manufacturer by chance in the corridor of a train, and he could talk of nothing but the way his son had passed all his examinations and was now at one of London's big hospitals.

I know only too well that this doesn't happen to everybody. What about the labourer, for instance, who may well turn round and say: "I was glad to get a job at all. I hate it—but what am I going to do?"

What about the millions of folk who do repetitive, routine jobs? Well, I've seen how the mill-folk of Lancashire and the steel workers of Sheffield and the miners of Barnsley and South Wales—and those office-bound men and women in cities—all cram their self-expression, and their craving for colour and excitement, into evenings or weekends.

I have seen them streaming home to be in time for the pictures; I have been hustled along on a tide of gay, jostling football fans; and I have watched them dancing or roller skating or flocking noisily into stadiums for ice-hockey or speedway. These are the occasions that put you at one with the world.

Do you know the story of the chap who was desperately keen to get work? He was walking along the canal bank one day with a pal when he came on a group of men on a dredging job. "Where's your boss?" he asked. One of them pointed into the water towards a lead that was evidently connected to a diver. "Down there," he said. Whereupon the chap who wanted a job promptly grabbed his nose between his fingers and jumped in, shouting to his friend: "If I don't come back tha'll know I've started!"

ONE of the rather strange things I've noticed about folk and their jobs is that those on the threshold of their working lives, and the old men and women at the end of theirs, really long to get down to it.

When I talk to kiddies in school I find they are always ready to tell me about what they're going to do; and how often in my journeys up and down Britain I meet old folk who say with some feeling that they have been compelled to retire!

This takes me back to my meeting with old Ted. I was introduced to him by a friend, who told me: "You must meet our gardener. He comes from Halifax." I found Ted a robust, rugged character of sixty-six, with a mop of grey hair that would have done credit to a man twenty years younger.

Soon, we were talking about Halifax and I asked him whether he remembered a certain outfitter's shop in Crown Street.

"Can't say I do," he said, hurling a slab of turf from his spade. And then, quite casually, he went on: "But my dad might remember it!"

"Your dad!"

"Ay, he'll be eighty-eight next month—an' he plays 'ell wi' me if I say I'm tired!"

MY own job means fifteen-hour working days for the best part of the week. On top of my broadcasting, there are rehearsals, articles to be written, thousands of letters to be answered, interviews with producers and writers, charity concerts and the garden parties and sales of work I am asked to open. I also make a point of visiting old folk and invalid and crippled children and hospitals.

Keeping up with a programme like this is often hectic going, but I enjoy every moment. I only hope I am still at it when I am as old as Ted's dad. I like my job as much as that.

Only the other night Mabel said: "Come on, Wilfred. It's nearly one o'clock. You've done enough today!"

"I'll just finish this," I called; and then added in mitigation: "Somebody once said hard work never killed anybody."

Next morning, we were in our usual hurry. From the kitchen came Mabel's voice: "Hey. Pickles! If we're going to catch this ten-fifty you'll have to wash while I dry!"

"Oh, heck!" I protested.

And like a shot from the kitchen came these words: "I seem to remember that somebody once said hard work never. . . ."

I washed and Mabel dried.

Next Week: Wilfred Pickles on Friendship

Smallboat training is a "must": it saved the life of one school hero

Headmaster Fuest: Switzerland is out for sailors, but he's fixed that

Brassbounders from Blackfriars

by IAN BEVAN

Many a sea captain has learnt to sail at the London Nautical School. And many a sea yarn is swopped in the head's study when an old boy calls into port

EVERY SO OFTEN, London schoolmaster F. J. Fuest dreams that one day he will be like others in his profession and able to attend an old boys' reunion where he will be surrounded by men whom his school has helped attain fame and fortune. Then he sighs and remembers that such a thing can never be, for Fuest is headmaster of the London Nautical School, and most of his ex-pupils are merchant navy officers—scattered not merely to the ends of the earth but into its oddest nooks and crannies.

So he contents himself with reading their letters, which come postmarked from almost every port in the world, and with attempting to arrange contacts between former classmates, one of whom last wrote from, say, Galveston, Texas, and the other from Miri, North Borneo.

Such old boys' reunions as do occur are informal, and liable to be anywhere except in London. Within the past few months Fuest has had news of small groups of ex-school friends meeting by chance in the merchant navy club at Abadan, the golden pagoda at Rangoon, and the Trocadero dance hall at Sydney.

Eighteen-year-old Basil Jensen, from North London, was last heard of on his way up the Amazon to collect a cargo of alligators; Peter Austin, seventeen, from Lambeth, had been exploring the kasbah in Algiers and was bound for Pondicherry; John Ellis, sixteen, from East Ham, was en route from Singapore to Jeddah with several hundred pilgrims for Mecca; and Alan Irons, twenty-four, from Charlton, has just returned from the Congo.

Geography Is No Trouble

With such peripatetic ex-pupils, Fuest has more or less abandoned hope of any large-scale reunion, but his school is on the banks of the River Thames and most of his old students sail into that river sooner or later. When they do, they generally come to see him with first-hand accounts of far-off places.

"One thing about us," Fuest told a colleague from another school when they were discussing the merits of their respective establishments, "we never have any trouble teaching geography. Mention any country you like, and the boys in the class know they stand a good chance of visiting it for themselves one day."

"What about Switzerland?" queried the colleague, anxious to score a point.

"We've fixed that," replied Fuest. "We know they can't sail there, so we send them over on winter sports tours while they're still at school."

Even Russia — closed to almost every other class of traveller except diplomats and Communist sympathizers—is still on the L.N.S. list of possibilities.

Derek Smith, from Woolwich, who left school in 1948, was back little more than a year later with a story to tell of his trip to one of the Soviet's Black Sea ports. While his ship was there, it was guarded night and day by a submarine and a gunboat, and armed lookouts on shore kept constant watch through powerful binoculars.

Shore leave was restricted; officers and crew had to remain on deck for four hours while the ship was searched; and Russians were not permitted to give anything to or receive anything from the British crew. All navigation lights in the harbour had been changed and information on the new lights was withheld. The ship's own navigation instruments were removed by the Russians and kept ashore while they were in port.

The Right Type Of Boy

The London Nautical School, at present housed in a cheerless Victorian building on the south bank midway between Waterloo and Blackfriars bridges, is a free day-school which has been run by the London County Council since 1915. It was started because London, the world's biggest port, had no school to train merchant navy officers—the very men on whom so much of the city's prosperity depended.

"A strong and efficient merchant navy is essential to our continued life as a nation," the school brochure says. "To maintain the high standard called for, our ships must be manned by well-educated seamen of the very best type. The aim of the school is to train the right type of boy for this great profession."

The brochure also points out that "a modern ship is a large and expensive unit with many and varied scientific instruments, a complex organization, and a specialized staff. To use his instruments, an officer must have a good knowledge of mechanics and physics; for his navigation, he must have a sound knowledge of mathematics; to take his part in the organization, to control staff, and to mix with passengers on easy terms, he must be a man of poise, understanding and general culture."

The school syllabus, as you would expect, lays heavy emphasis on mechanics, physics and maths, as well as special classes in navigation,

Captain Harvey supervises ship-to-ship drill. A brassbounder in the bad old days, he doesn't believe in pampering his boys

Lifeboat drill carried out in the school playground. Very few of the school's apprentices come from seafaring families

seamanship, meteorology, chart-work, ship construction and signals. By the time a boy has learned what Fuest thinks he ought to know, he has covered most of the work laid down by the Ministry of Transport for the second mate's examination—which he can't sit for until he has been at sea four years and reached the age of twenty.

Most of the boys start their careers on cargo vessels and oil tankers. In the old days—and not necessarily so old, for conditions did not improve a great deal until just before the last war—their status as apprentice officers (or "brassbounders," as they were known at sea) was not very much better than that of able seamen, except that they had to work a great deal harder.

£5 A Year—And Took Bedding

Captain H. V. Harvey, a salt-stained Cornishman who left the sea during the slump to teach at the school, often reminds pupils that, when he started as an apprentice in 1915, he was paid £5 a year and had to provide his own cutlery and bedding. He shared a ten-foot by ten-foot cabin with other apprentices, and worked twelve hours a day. He had no paid holidays and got home for a couple of days every second trip if he was lucky.

These days an apprentice starts at £75 a year and moves up to £120 in his fourth year. Accommodation is generally two to a cabin, with all found, and apprentices live and eat in the same style as the officers.

About thirty years ago it was the custom for the ship's captain on a cargo vessel to be given so much per head to feed the crew, and what he saved on food bills went into his own pocket. One master at the school remembers a voyage he made as apprentice, from South Africa to England, when his skipper bought potatoes for the crew in Capetown, sold them at a profit in Dakar, and left only three or four bags to feed a crew of thirty-five for the rest of the voyage.

Some years later he sailed as second mate with the same captain, who jovially told the story to the officers one night after dinner as an example of his business acumen. In the re-telling, he claimed to have left "plenty for the boys."

"Like hell you did," said the second mate.

"Good heavens," said the captain, "were you on board?" and he had the grace to blush.

Captain Harvey has no particular brief for the bad old days, but he thinks they turned out better seamen. "The more comforts you give these youngsters," he says, "the less anxious they are to stay at sea."

Wastage of young officers is a serious problem in the merchant marine. Shipping officials estimate that one in every three apprentices quits the sea in his early twenties. Marriage is an important factor. Young wives don't like being without their husbands for perhaps eleven months of the year, so they persuade them to become landlubbers.

"In my day," said Captain Harvey, "we couldn't dream of getting married until we were drawing at least a first mate's pay, and by that time we were old enough to be firmly settled into the life. Now they can afford to get married while they're still third officers, and that makes it much easier for them to switch jobs."

But the sea still has its lure for youngsters and Fuest has four applicants for every vacancy in the school.

Very few of the boys come from seafaring families. Sixteen-year-old Terry Glenn, from Brixton, who hopes to gain an apprenticeship this year, is typical. His father is a labourer on the tramways and there were no sailors among his relatives or ancestors that he knows of, but for as long as he can remember he has wanted to go to sea.

Graduates of the London Nautical School sometimes get more adventure than they've bargained for. Peter Ward, who left in 1940, was torpedoed on his second voyage and held as a prisoner of war for five years. Last year he was third officer on the *Anhui* when she was shelled by the Chinese Nationalists leaving Amoy, and Peter was wounded. Now he is fit again and studying for his mate's certificate.

The outstanding adventure story happened to David Clowe, who was captain of the school in 1939, went to sea on his sixteenth birthday in April, 1940, and three years later won the George Medal for one of the most remarkable feats of heroism and seamanship in the war history of the merchant navy.

Clowe was torpedoed three times—the third time when he was a supernumerary apprentice on the P. and O. cargo ship *Shillong*, bringing zinc concentrates across the North Atlantic. A torpedo hit them at about quarter past ten on the night of his nineteenth birthday, and David ended up in command of a twenty-three foot lifeboat with thirty-seven others.

The boat was dangerously overloaded, a gale was blowing, the waves were forty feet high, and the temperature was twenty below zero. Thirty-one men died from exposure during the next eight days, but Clowe, using every desperate expedient, kept the boat afloat and navigated it through to the air patrol area, where eventually the last seven were rescued by a destroyer.

Legs Were A Shapeless Mass

Five of them lost limbs, but fortunately not Clowe, although his weight dropped from thirteen stone to less than eleven, and his legs, like the others, had swollen into black, shapeless masses. After several months ashore, he went back to sea, but the experience had taken such a toll on his health that finally he was discharged with a full pension and is now working as an engineering designer in London.

"I had luck," he said, recalling the incident the other day, "but my real luck was that I had had training in small boats before I went to sea. Often when I was in the lifeboat I remembered Captain Harvey back at the school saying: 'Keep her head on to the wind and sea' and 'Take the dirty weather on your bow.' I did, and we got through."

Captain Harvey insists on training in small boats for all his pupils, something which many merchant navy officers never get until they are shipwrecked. The school has five lifeboats down at the Surrey Docks which the boys use twice a week.

One of Captain Harvey's chief ambitions is to charter, or preferably to borrow, a seventy-foot yacht to take himself and about fourteen boys on an early summer cruise from London around the southern coast to New Quay, on Cardigan Bay, where the school was located for most of the war years.

"That would give them a chance to put their classroom theory into practice before they actually went to sea on a merchant vessel," he says.

Skipper Was His Ex-pupil

Most Saturday afternoons during term-time, Harvey takes groups of boys around the London docks to look over merchant ships. A few months ago he went aboard one vessel, the 10,000-tonner *Derrynane*, to ask the captain for permission to bring a party of boys aboard that afternoon, and found himself speaking to one of his own old boys, Captain T. Townsley.

An important result of these dock-side visits, Captain Harvey explains, is that, when the boys ultimately go to sea, they join their first ship knowing just what to expect as regards accommodation, the type of gear they will handle, and the work they will be called upon to do. They start off without any false impressions, which may be why the school has a well-above-average record for boys sticking to their jobs.

A survey of the record for pupils placed in apprenticeships for 1938 to 1945 shows that ninety-one per cent are still at sea and have passed their second mate's exam or better.

With these results, Fuest can afford to be philosophic about such minor catastrophes as the one that occurred when he was entertaining a visitor to the school at lunch.

The boy who had volunteered to bring the dishes up to the headmaster's study dropped them all in the passage outside with a nerve-shattering clatter. "Ah, well," said Fuest, "we're training officers, not stewards."

THE END

"No savvy, eh?" said James Alexis. "Blimey, I'll show yer!" He was wise in the art of street fighting. The gipsy howled and fell

Home James!

by ***NINA WARNER HOOKE***

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD O. ROSE

Miss Figg hated all small boys, particularly small Cockney boys. To James Alexis, she was irresistible

IT WAS AN UNDERSTOOD thing among members of the Rural Adoption Committee at Compton Abbas that, whatever their difficulties, they should refrain from approaching the lady who was, in many ways, the social figurehead of their small community. Not because her house had any lack of accommodation, but because of the somewhat forbidding character of the lady herself.

Miss Figg was by no means the sort of person who could be asked to take to her bosom a strange child from the East End of London. Miss Figg was a misanthropist. And if there was any facet of humanity which she detested more than the rest, it was the young of the species.

Only child and heiress of the late General Sir Archibald Figg, this eccentric person held a position of social prominence which she did little to justify. She took no part in the activities of the Church or of the Women's Institute; she did not attend either the Vicarage Garden Fête or the annual productions of the Drama League. She made no donations to local charities. She neither paid calls nor received them. She allowed no blackberrying along the footpath that skirted her domain. She waged perpetual warfare against the Boy Scouts.

It was thought likely that some deep-seated crisis in early life might account for this uncompromising attitude. But such was not the case. Miss Figg's sole peculiarity was that she preferred her own company to that of anyone else.

Other people pursued their daily lives all around her. She acknowledged their existence with a perfunctory greeting when driving about the village in her ancient pony-trap; but she was prepared to go no further. Her aloofness was not resented. On the contrary, it invested her with an aura of almost reverential respect. By virtue of her oddity, Miss Figg was a "character"—and therefore entitled to special consideration.

She lived, quite alone, in the Tudor house at the top of Cobb's Lane. Mrs. Packett came out from the village daily to "do for her." The house was not large, but made up in importance by the size of the garden, which spread around and behind it to the extent of more than an acre.

This garden was Miss Figg's pride and preoccupation. In it she laboured from early morn till

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JOHN BULL March 18 1950

How fares Tito, the rebel?

by EDWARD CRANKSHAW

His defiance of Russia has made a tight situation tighter. His people are poor and police-ridden. Even so, it seems as though they prefer the devil they know, says Crankshaw after a visit to Jugoslavia

Colleagues greet Tito after Macedonian "pep" tour. His big achievement has been unity

YOU HAVE ONLY to walk down the main streets of Belgrade to know that Marshal Tito could never succeed in ironing out the Serbs, as the Kremlin dictatorship has ironed out the Russians—even if he so desired.

Certainly Belgrade is drab and shabby enough. It was never a beautiful city, in spite of its magnificent situation on the low cliffs commanding the junction of two great rivers, the Danube and the Save. Today, although it has many new buildings, including skyscraper efforts in concrete and steel, its atmosphere is not the brilliant, crowded, almost feverish atmosphere of a capital city: instead it has the look and feelings of an overgrown provincial town. And its drabness is emphasized by the elimination of the rich and the continuing poverty of the poor.

For, like any other Communist country, Jugoslavia is now a place where everyone is poor; everyone, that is to say, but the party bosses and a few gifted managers and engineers who ride in American cars of the very latest style—the sort of cars, all Perspex and chromium, with the back end looking like the front, which in London we see mainly in the neighbourhood of foreign embassies. The rest go on foot, or, for longer journeys, pack themselves into dashing scarlet trolleybuses which career up and down two or three streets but leave most of the city untouched.

Belgrade's Man-in-the-street

And the crowds on the pavement in Belgrade give you a very good idea of the sort of people Marshal Tito has to deal with, the raw material for the Jugoslav industrial revolution, symbolized by the unwieldy five-year plan. It would be hard anywhere to find a more striking mixture of different races—all the races of the Southern Slav Federation, which is what Jugoslavia stands for, with their different histories, religions and national characteristics: plainsmen and mountaineers; Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Moslem.

The Serbs preponderate, of course. Belgrade was the capital of Serbia before it became the capital of Jugoslavia, the new kingdom fashioned out of the wreckage of the first World War, and comprehending such diverse and opposed elements as the westernized Croats and Slovenes, who had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and had fought with Germany and Austria against the Allies; the Bosnians from the mountains, who were many years later to become the centre of Tito's resistance movement; the Montenegrins, more mountaineers, who formed an independent kingdom on the side of Serbia against the Austrians and the Germans; the Dalmatians from the lovely, barren Adriatic coast; and, as well as these, Macedonian and Albanian minorities.

Mountain Women In Trousers

You can see them all in Belgrade today, townsmen and peasants all mixed up together. Serbian peasant women come in from the villages to the market, a couple of live fowls dangling from their wrists, or carpet shopping bags slung on a pole across their shoulders and wearing embroidered jackets and aprons—not their Sunday best, which is a glory, but the work-aday versions of their national costume. With them mingle Moslem women from the mountains in their Turkish trousers, and tall, gangling Albanians in breeches made of untanned leather sewn together with carpet thread, or in patched rags of hessian which seem hardly to hold together, and shoes with upswept, pointed toes.

But, above all, of course, Belgrade belongs to its own citizens, tall, extremely well built, dark, strong but strangely unhandsome Serbs, who walk about as though they own the world—perhaps the toughest and most complacent race in the world, who have nevertheless done nothing to show for the superiority which they so carelessly take for granted (certainly nothing in the fields of the arts, the sciences, or government) except one thing—to fight to the death against foreign tyranny.

For it was the Serbs who took on the Austrian Empire single-handed, thus precipitating the first World War. It was the Serbs—though Tito himself is a Croat, normally a softer breed, which hates the Serbs and regards them as barbarians—who provided the backbone of the dramatic stand against Hitler in 1941. And now it is the Serbs rallying round Tito, who have the effrontery to stand up alone—helped now by all the people of the Federation, some of whom wavered in face of Hitler, or even collaborated with him—to the vast might of the Soviet Union, before which much greater Powers, such as the U.S.A., shiver in a kind of hypnotized hysteria. Belgrade is their capital—as raw and uncompromising as they are themselves.

Thus it is that while the first thing that seems to strike most visitors to Belgrade is what they call the down-trodden looks of the people, what struck me when I was lately there was the precise opposite—the upstanding sturdiness of the people. That was because I had lived for a long time in Russia, and most visitors to Belgrade have not. For them Belgrade offers their first sight of Communism in action; for me it did not. Certainly the place is drab enough. Certainly the people are, by and large, unhappy under Tito. But they are very far from being cowed into that grey apathy so familiar to those who know their Russia.

Ironmonger Dealt In One Line

The shops are dingy and empty, like the shops of wartime England—but with the special Communist accent. By which I mean that every so often, what used to be a shoeshop or a milliner's or a jeweller's has been taken over for a special display of technical skills—or veterinary instruments, or plumbers' fittings. One large ironmonger had a window display consisting almost entirely of garden trowels of a most primitive kind. Row after row of them, all identical, all hiding the emptiness within. For the ordinary things an ironmonger sells cannot be bought—things like kettles and pots and pans of every kind.

Even when you do see an attempt at a colourful display, the goods are not for the crowds gathered round to look. Either they are strictly rationed (but nobody has enough coupons) or else they are on free sale at ten times the rationed price (and nobody has enough money).

The black market is strong; but it is a market for essentials, not luxuries. And the second-hand

prices of every-day necessities show very clearly how stringent the rationing is. Thus a workaday pair of shoes will cost £20; an ordinary cheap comb will fetch £3 to £5; a toothbrush simply cannot be bought anywhere at all; while eggs cost £2 10s. a dozen.

This situation is reflected everywhere—and so is the toughness of the people who are putting up with it. Jugoslavia is having an orgy of building and reconstruction under the five-year plan. But machinery is hard to come by, and what machinery there is is largely immobilized for lack of spares.

Thus, on some special project, like the great new motor-road from Belgrade to Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, you will see an assemblage of machinery—serried ranks of bulldozers and mechanical excavators—which gives you an entirely wrong idea of the state of mechanization throughout the country. For those bulldozers are there only because a thousand and one other enterprises have been deprived of them.

In the very heart of Belgrade, just before the first snow, gangs of men could be seen re-laying a street that had been made up inefficiently by the famous voluntary labour brigades. They tore up the macadamized surface not with drills but with picks, threw the chunks of old road into a tar boiler, melted it down, poured the liquid into little wheelbarrows and, having no sprayers, emptied the wheelbarrows back on to the road, went down on their hands and knees and carefully spread the smoking tar out smoothly with squared blocks of wood.

A people who can do that sort of thing and still look upstanding—and that is how all the rebuilding of Belgrade is being done—can do anything if they set their minds to it. Can outlast even the Russians.

The Jugoslavs would be having a hard time even without the Tito-Stalin quarrel. In the early days, Tito's Government went faster than any of the satellite governments in its imitation of the Soviet system, with its oppressive police rule and its deliberate sacrifice of all the comforts of life in order to build up a heavy industry in the shortest possible time. But that quarrel, which means so much to the world, has made just the difference between a difficult situation and a desperate one.

Young Belgrade couple go shopping. The party bosses apart, nearly all Jugoslavs are poor today—"but theirs is honourable poverty"

Eastern Trade Is Cut

It has thrown completely out of gear the famous five-year plan, to which the whole economy of the country was harnessed. It has done this by cutting Jugoslavia's trade with central and eastern Europe, above all with Czechoslovakia and Poland.

Even before this happened, the plan was really too much for the country to carry. Tito and his planners, in their determination to force through the revolution and turn Jugoslavia into a self-supporting and industrialized country, as the first stage towards a higher standard of living for all, bit off more than they could chew.

There was too much emotion in the plan. Tito had to demonstrate that Jugoslavia could do everything, and all at once, whether it was sensible and economical or not. And so factory after factory was planned to turn out capital equipment and machinery which it would have been more intelligent, and far less disturbing to the harassed peasants, to buy from abroad with exports of food.

Tito even wanted to make jet-aircraft, which, in a country which had never made an aeroplane of any sort and whose masses were peasants of the most primitive kind, bordered on the absurd.

The Russian campaign against Tito hit an economy which was most precariously balanced, and at once sent it reeling. The old ways had been abandoned; the new were far from established. And all this forms the background to the drabness and poverty in Belgrade today.

Prefer Tito—Despite All

It is an honourable poverty. And, as I have said, the people, although they are cold this winter and often hungry, bear it magnificently—all the more magnificently because the majority do not want Tito's Communism. But they prefer Tito to Stalin, the Jugoslav to the foreigner. And they seem pretty determined to stick things out, no matter how deeply they may resent, the majority of them, the iron rule of Tito's police, the collectivization of the farms, the forced labour, the nationalisation of everything—not only of industry and the public services, but everything, from retail shops to gipsy orchestras.

If Tito had nothing to show for his new régime, it might seem that a discontented people would welcome anything for a change and would play the Russian game, if not by active revolt against the Government, at least by passive resistance and go-slow tactics which might finally ruin the country's economy and bring the Government down in ruin.

But Tito has, in fact, a good deal to show.

Jugoslavia, quite apart from the terrible devastations of war, was among the most backward of countries. Although it could feed itself, there were innumerable peasants with insufficient land to keep them properly alive. There was all too little attempt to develop the country's own industrial and mineral resources. And far too much of the natural wealth was worked by foreigners in the form of concessions and the profits taken out of the country.

Tito has put an end to that. He has shown backward peasants what they can do. And he has done wonders with his grand electrification scheme.

All this counts for something, and, especially when there is no visible alternative to Tito, must be in the people's eyes a symbol of hope and resolution. So I think it is safe to say that the great majority even of those who dislike the régime have no hankering after the corrupt and futile governments of the past.

Finally, Tito has made something like a unified country out of Jugoslavia—and this is perhaps his greatest achievement. Jugoslavia is no longer a centralized kingdom run by Serbs for the benefit of Serbs—the Serbs who were hated more than the Germans by the Croats. It is a federation of national republics.

Although in fact Tito's Belgrade Government, his Politburo on the Soviet model, does run the country for and on behalf of the Communist Party, it is done with extreme tact.

Each of the nationalities has its own official government with its own Prime Minister, installed to carry out Tito's orders in the way most likely to go down well with the local population.

Alive To Russian Threat

There is no doubt at all that the old hatreds are still only just below the surface. But there is equally no doubt that Tito has made a going concern out of his very difficult collection of peoples. And there is no doubt at all that it has been Soviet pressure which has helped him to weld his own peoples together.

In a word, the Jugoslavs will certainly not give way to the Russians; and it seems highly improbable that they are ready to exchange the devil they know for a devil they do not know.

This means that the only thing that can upset Tito, and thus win the game for Moscow, is economic collapse.

Tito has a very difficult game to play. But we may be fairly confident that the longer he survives the more he will have to adapt his régime, changing it from the Moscow model to something more acceptable to the people he is trying to weld together into a unified nation. If he succeeds in developing an independent Communism, free from the tyranny of the secret police at home and unaggressive abroad, he may well split the Cominform wide open and change the whole direction of European history. THE END

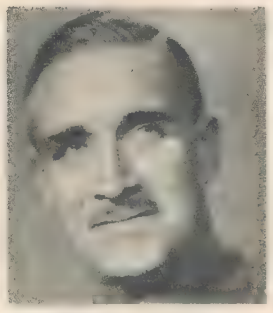
VOYAGE OF THE GILCA (3)

Already seventy days at sea, and during the past thirty days all we'd had to eat were three seagulls

Tension mounts between us

by Captain
"MICK" JENNINGS
ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR SEABRIGHT

As Hall drew the revolver I misjudged his intention. Maybe that *was* the way out



Captain Jennings

This is the almost incredible true story of an ocean escapade—told by one of the two men who took part in it. To get away from the Japanese in 1942, the author, Captain "Mick" Jennings, and an Army companion, Bombardier Jackson Hall, set out in a seventeen-foot dinghy, the "Gilca," from Enggano, off Sumatra. They hoped to make Australia and freedom—1,500 miles across the tropical sea. Storms and crosswinds soon defeated that hope. So they decided to make for Java instead. A tragic discovery was that their food stocks were contaminated and uneatable. Already weakened by exposure and hours of baling, they were now without any food.

And then, one afternoon, a seagull perched on the dinghy. Jennings crept forward and shot it. Six hours later the two men were still chewing.

Captain Jennings continues his story. . . .

JUST BEFORE DAWN the weather changed, and great gusts of wind threatened to carry away the sail, which was hurriedly lowered and made secure. The rope was paid out over the bow and *Gilca* bided her time, riding head to sea.

As the grey light of morning appeared, an unbroken vista of foam-capped waves became visible. For a time our tiny craft rode the seas like the lady she was, but as the day advanced the sea became very violent, making it impossible to stand up in the boat.

Both of us realized that we must take advantage of the rain to fill the water tank, and the old procedure of baling was instituted until the water was voted fit to drink. The tank was half empty, and to insert some twenty gallons by a pint mug through a four-inch hole which persisted in bucking about, was a long and laborious operation.

In the waning light we saw another seagull on the bowsprit. Into the pouring rain I went, slowly and carefully, and repeated the tactics of the previous day, and five minutes after it landed, the gull lay dead in the boat.

Hungry as we were, we were too tired even to prepare it for eating. So we contented ourselves by chopping off its head and drinking the blood, but in pumping the bird dry several squid came from its gullet, and these we ate with relish. The body was laid on the water tank, and, pulling a corner of the blanket over our heads, we again tried to induce sleep, until the water, washing about in the bilge, should wake us by splashing through the slats.

I remember thinking that this was to be my first really good night's sleep during the long voyage. Being too exhausted to eat, yet knowing tomorrow's breakfast was waiting, kept my subconscious mind clear of the horrible fantasies which had plagued me night after night during the twenty days of enforced starving.

Rising somewhat refreshed from the sleep of exhaustion, I was pleased to see the morning was fine and clear, for this meant that the sodden, smelly blankets could be dried. There on the tank lay our decapitated breakfast, the most welcome sight I have ever seen.

Something in my brain was trying to connect the events of long ago with today. Surely today was July 2? Then this was the anniversary of my wedding day, and I had not sent my wife a bouquet of red roses as was my custom. I looked round as though in the hope of being able to find a way of doing something about this when my eyes focused on a seagull perched upon the bowsprit.

As I watched the bird lazily, it struck me that it was a stupid place to put our breakfast. Hall ought to have known better, and what the devil did he mean by sticking the thing's head on again? Turning slightly to ease my aching bones, I put my hand on the water tank and something soft greeted my touch, and looking up I saw the headless gull.

Feeling annoyed that he couldn't leave the bird alone, my temper began to rise. Why should he want to put the thing here and then there? I looked there—there being the bowsprit—and then at my hand, in which reposed the dead gull. He surely couldn't put it in two places at the same time.

My numbed brain tried to cope with this overpowering situation, and it finally dawned upon me that I was not dreaming; that the bird on the sprit was alive; and that I had better do something about it. Hall was still asleep, and an eager desire surged over me to surprise him by presenting him with a bird all for himself.

I Fired Again

This, of course, meant that I, too, would have a whole bird, but I somehow felt like a superior Good Samaritan who was about to give his friend the greatest gift in the world—food. Once again, but this time unwatched, I repeated my killing routine, the revolver cracked, and in the short time that the bullet was crossing the space from mast to bowsprit, I realized what a fool I had been not to wake Hall, as the gull might easily drop into the sea and float past the boat before I could grab it.

But the Fates were kind, and number three bird fell into the boat. Hall sat up as though I had shot him, and his eyes travelled from the bird in my hand to the one on the tank, and as I laid them side by side, he was already groping for the axe to behead the latest arrival. We sipped the blood as one would drink morning coffee, while Hall skinned our breakfast with a covetous glance in the direction of our supper.

The situation was rapidly improving, and if we could only carry on like this we might put on a little more flesh by the time we reached Java. When breakfast was nearly ready, Hall

Continued on page 25

Emperor of the Fairground

by WARREN HARRIS

In the fairground business today's gold mine may be tomorrow's grand flop. Showman John Collins has to reshape his empire every time tastes change

THE FAIR HAS BEEN SET UP in the market-place for the best part of a day, but for the moment, at least, nobody seems to care. Under their wide, gaudy awnings the roundabouts revolve emptily, and the smell of cooking food mingles with the smell of diesel oil.

Clustered in little groups beside their stands, smoking and gossiping, the showmen watch the sky. In another hour it will be night.

A long black Mercédès noses its way across the square, and out gets a chunky little man in a blue birds-eye-pattern suit with his hat perched rakishly on the side of his head. Showman John Collins, of Bloxwich, Staffs, is surveying an outpost of his empire.

Father Tried His Luck

It is nearly eighty years now since John's father, the late Pat Collins, set out at the age of fifteen with an old pony roundabout that he had borrowed from John's grandfather to try his luck on the road.

Five years ago, after a lifetime in show business on his own account, forty-three year old John succeeded to the fruits of his father's labour—the ownership of some fifteen Midland fairgrounds, three mammoth amusement parks—at Sutton Coldfield, Great Yarmouth and Barry Island—100 "rides" in the swing and roundabout category, a minor procession of wagons and trailers, and 500 employees on a payroll that totals £3,000 a week. Says John: "It's worth a level million."

But empires are not maintained by just sitting back and hoping that the profits will roll in. A showman has to be alive to every change of public taste, with the courage to scrap a former gold-mine as soon as the takings have started to drop, and ready to give any new idea, no matter how far-fetched, a trial.

There was the occasion some years ago when Collins numbered among his tenants at Great Yarmouth the redoubtable Harry Lester, later of "Hayseeds" fame, with a show composed of such gruesome exhibits as Jesse James's bones and the blood-stained car in which Jack Diamond went on his last ride.

Business at the time was no more than fair, and Lester was searching in his mind for a stunt which would make all their fortunes overnight. "John," he announced one day, "I've got it! How many people have seen a real whale?"

John had to admit that not many had. He arranged for somebody to go straightaway and harpoon one, and within a period of months "The World's Greatest Whale" opened at Manchester, in the height of what would normally have been regarded as a heaven-sent heat wave.

Show Was Too "Strong"

It was soon clear to the promoters that the one item for which they had omitted to provide was the most important of all—preservative. The whale began to "go wrong" on them so alarmingly fast that even the spieler (barker) who was officiating at the booth threw his hand in.

Further debate on the subject was cut short by the local sanitary inspector, who closed the show down. There now arose the problem of how they should dispose of the whale, Collins maintaining that it would be far too expensive to carry it back to the sea and dump it. Finally they settled on a field some little way outside Manchester, where the whale was cut into portions and burnt—but even at five miles distance Manchester was not unaware of the fact.

That Whale Again

But still Collins felt that there had been possibilities in that whale, if only they could have overcome their initial problem. Accordingly, some months later, in the Black Country, the world's greatest whale appeared again—this time a carefully constructed skeleton, over which the outer skin of a whale had been cleverly moulded.

Public reaction was not as bright as it might have been. Lunchtime of the first day brought a report from the spieler that two tough-looking customers had heard out three lectures on the subject but still showed no signs of departing. So Collins decided to take a hand himself.

"Well, gentlemen," he said to the toughs, "if you've heard all you want to about this magnificent whale, my friend would like to close the booth and get his lunch."

"That's all very well," replied the larger of the two, jerking an indignant thumb in the direction of the whale, "but when's it going to *do* summat?"

Unlike most of the other 300-odd showmen who range the roads of Britain, Collins's year is divided into very distinct periods. In February, when the fairground season traditionally opens at Lichfield and King's Lynn, Collins is as much a travelling showman as all the rest of them, but as soon as the summer months draw on, his attention is concentrated exclusively on the business that is being done at his seaside pleasure grounds.

Hop, Mop and Goose Fairs

Not until September, the beginning of what showmen call "the back-end run," is he once again working around the fairgrounds, for from then on until late November come the formidable succession of chartered and statute fairs that fall due one by one all over the north and midlands—Worcester "Hop" Fair and Gloucester "Mop" Fair, Rotherham Statutes and Nottingham Goose Fair.

Between Christmas and March, which is the average showman's leanest season, Collins is preoccupied with a large-scale refurbishing programme at Yarmouth, where £5,000 worth of repairs are normally made every year. It is the most popular items which are the hardest hit. Dodgems, which have reigned unchallenged for twenty-five years, rarely last longer than two seasons. "Jumping horses" and "waltzers," which enjoy almost equal popularity, are always high up on the casualty list.

But since anything that comes within the category of a "ride" is a money-spinner and can take £20 an hour, most large-scale showmen can weather the winter months without feeling the pinch very greatly. It is the "wallpaper" (sideshow tenants) that suffers most, and some of them employ remarkable subterfuges to make a little extra on the side when the season opens again.

On one occasion at King's Lynn, when money was particularly tight, Collins had to clamp down on a tenant for reviving a hoary old weighted-skittle swindle that had long been illegal, known as "the cobbler." Unfortunately for the showman, the police stepped in first and issued a summons.

When the case came before the local Bench, the showman surprised everyone by refusing to plead guilty and even insisted on conducting his own defence—which, in his eyes, was absolutely cast-iron.

They had summoned him, he said, on a charge of operating a game of chance, and whatever else "the cobbler" might be, it wasn't a game of chance— "because," he concluded triumphantly, "they haven't *got* a chance."

£1,000 Ground Rent

Within his own territory—anywhere within a sixty-mile radius of his headquarters—Collins himself, unless he owns the fairground, will pay the three-day ground-rent, ranging from £380 to £1,000, to the local corporation, and the "rides," each one of which is supervised by a foreman, will be his own property. There may be anything between four and twenty of these, with as many as 150 tenants.

During the "back-end run" even the lay-out of the fair becomes a matter of prime importance. "Rides" occupy all central positions, with the "wallpaper" ranged carefully along the fairground's perimeter.

Each booth, by tacit consent, occupies the same position as it held in the previous year.

Between Collins and his longest-standing tenants there exists an unspoken yet deep-rooted understanding of one another's basic problems. Most of his "flashes" (star turns), who earn an average of £25 a week, remember that in the early days it was Collins who had the headache of launching their acts for the first time—and rarely with any clue as to what the public's response was likely to be.

Recently, for instance, when Wall-of-Death rider Eddie Monty was circling the wall twenty feet up at a level sixty miles per hour, every light in the tent cut out at the same time. Previously the audience had been requested to put out their

First day at Lichfield. Collins briefs his fairground manager

Roundabouts, dodgems, anything the customer can take a ride on are still money-spinners. But most stunts that begin as sensations soon fade away

cigarettes, but it was only because most of them had ignored this injunction that Eddie was able to touch down safely, using the pinpoints of light as a guide.

"But," says Eddie, "that's nothing to the tussle the guv'nor had to make the Wall a going concern in the first place."

Wall Of Death Rivalry

That was in the days when the Wall had just reached England, and Collins found himself engaged in unwavering rivalry with Joe Silverstone, a South African, who was better known as "The Prince of Spielers." Running the first Wall-of-Death act ever to be seen in Britain, Silverstone was at first well ahead of Collins in both methods and presentation, until Collins, on a business trip to America, ran into a showman who rejoiced in the name of "Fearless Egbert."

From Egbert's viewpoint, Collins's worries were all solved from that moment on. No Wall-of-Death rider, however intrepid, would stand much chance against "Fearless Egbert," who rode the wall in a high-powered racing car with two forest-bred lions roaring defiance from the bonnet.

On the first night that he presented Egbert in England, however, Collins, who had never previously seen the act, suffered a shock. The "high-powered car" was somewhat smaller than the midget models of those days. It mounted the wall with its nearside wheel only and continued to revolve on that basis for the duration of the show.

The "forest-bred lions" were six-month-old cubs, who wouldn't even agree to hop on the bonnet until Egbert has fastened a large piece of steak to the mascot. Collins gave Egbert just two months to put on an act that would restore them to solvency.

When Collins and Silverstone opened simultaneously at King's Lynn at the beginning of the next season, Egbert really did redeem himself. With car and lions he rode the wall at a height of twenty feet while three motor cycles perilously criss-crossed his path, and the wall itself, as Collins puts it, "shook like a great lump of jelly." The crowd went wild, and on the second day the "Prince of Spielers" packed up his traps and departed.

Other shows, though they survive in altered forms, have at the same time undergone a subtle change in emphasis and presentation. Veteran Charlie Hickman, for instance, who once, in the palmy days of his boxing booth, knocked out six fourteen-stone colliers in a row, now hesitates "to do more than tap 'em—they can't stand up to it."

"Freaks Are Repulsive"

Tom Norman, who has been running novelty shows all his life, finds that "freaks are out—they're altogether repulsive to the present-day audience." Nowadays the fare served up is "nothing you couldn't take a parson into"—an act that rivals the Piddingtons, for instance, with a man reading a book through six layers of surgical bandages, and another act in which a man plays the piano with his toes.

Such novelty shows as have survived unaltered are imbedded so deep in tradition that even changes in public taste have been insufficient to oust them. Barney Worth, for instance, who weighs forty-eight stone, and his wife, Joy, turning the scales at twenty-six stone eight pounds, are still star attractions.

Compared with the boom of the immediate postwar years, even Saturday nowadays is relatively quiet. Collins estimates that the average patron today spends no more than 5s. on the fairground. "You really need £2 10s. to cover the whole thing in style, and in the old days some of 'em used to spend that."

Prices Are Up

At a large-scale fiesta such as the Birmingham Onion Fair the showman may cater for as many as a quarter of a million people in three days—but against this apparent gold-rush Collins balances the fact that nearly all of the most popular "rides" have trebled in price over the past ten years.

Roundabouts, £3,000 before the war, are £10,000 each today. Dodgems are in the same category. And helter-skelters, formerly no more than £500 apiece, are now fetching as much as £3,000.

All showmen regard it as bad luck to open a fair on a Friday, to run over a snake in the road, or to give a friend a free ride before money has been taken.

Collins's own pet superstition is that green is unlucky and he cites the instance of a tenancy he once held at Newcastle Fair to prove it. He was then in charge of two "loopers"—a blue one, belonging to his uncle, and a green one, which was his own.

His uncle's "looper" did roaring business all through the first two days of the fair, but not until he had had his own "looper" repainted red did Collins take a single penny for himself.

Most showmen are more than usually resourceful. When Pat Collins first attempted to open his headquarters at Bloxwich, for example, it turned out that the rights to hold a public fair were already vested in Walsall Corporation. Pat promptly changed his style, called his entertainment a "fête and carnival," charged a twopenny admission fee and gave his patrons sixpennyworth of entertainment.

But John's favourite story of resourcefulness occurred some years ago at Great Yarmouth, when a sideshow proprietor sought his help in staging a novelty act that would set the cash registers ringing far into the night. The act was to be Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs—the performers, Czechoslovakian midgets, were already doing tremendous business in Prague.

Snow White Remained

Collins applied to the Ministry of Labour for working permits, but in the meantime the showman, confident that everything would work out without a hitch, began to bill the show in the biggest possible way. When Collins finally sought him out to tell him that permission had been refused, Yarmouth was talking about very few other things except the advent of Snow White.

On the day that the fair finally opened it was Collins's turn to receive a shock. Overnight, as if by magic, all mention of the Seven Dwarfs had been erased from the billing—but Snow White still remained as large as life.

"And," says Collins, "what a sell he put over on the public that day! Half of them were splitting their sides with laughter and half of them were racing round to my caravan demanding their money back.

"He couldn't get his seven dwarfs, but he was determined to get his Snow White—so he'd substituted the Fat Lady."

BUSH FIRE

by MACKE

Exhausted, all chance of escape gone, she thought of her husband. The thing between them might never be resolved now

RAISING HER FACE from her husband's shoulder, Katherine looked at him as he stood in the strong sunlight of the doorway, while the vast, silver and gold glitter of the bush formed a backdrop for him. He was a big and fair man, beautifully muscled and burned to ruddy tan by the Australian sun.

She said, "I do love you so much!"

He flushed a shade more deeply and answered, "Thank you, dear." He smiled down at her and, as always, she liked the expression of his eyes and the line of his cheek, but wished that she knew if he flushed from embarrassment or pleasure. Then he let her go. "I've got to be off or the men will be waiting for me!"

Still keeping her hands on the firm warmth of his shoulders, she thought: What do I really mean to you? We have been married three years, but would you be just as patient and kind and considerate with any woman? Is it still the good buildings and good land and the animals that matter most?

He was a silent, shy man, influenced perhaps by the constant wild loneliness of the bush. She knew that he liked her, that he was grateful for a woman who would face solitude and for a housekeeper who tended his home, who even shared his love of the strange land. But beyond that she was still unsure.

Keeping her face serene, she released him at last, and he smiled at her affectionately as he lifted his swag to his shoulder and moved through the diamond fire of sunlight to his old, brown stockhorse, deftly strapped the swag in place across the pommel and swung himself to the saddle. Stooping to put his hand under her chin, he said, "Take care of yourself!"

Then he turned the horse towards the faintly defined bush track and she knew that he could not return for almost twelve weeks, for he had at last reached the goal to which he had been driving in all the years of their marriage, when he need no longer merely pasture other men's sheep but could establish his own flock. And he was on his way, halfway across the infinity of Queensland, to bring the sheep home.

At the edge of the timber he turned and waved his wide-brimmed felt hat to her. Then horse and rider were gone and she was alone, while through the crystal brilliance of the still, sunlit, inland air the promise of frost was striking. She shivered as she ran back to the warm and ordered house and, having closed the door, approved the room with its slab walls of rich red and cream boxwood, its red floor of beaten antbed spread with home-tanned kangaroo skins, and its benches and tables of sandalwood and ringed gidea.

She thought the house beautiful, and it brought her husband to her strongly for he had made the things of the house for her with the patience and skill of his strong hands. While she was an English girl, and much of the bush was still strange to her, she loved all things of their life—the more, perhaps, for shared hardships. But she wished she were sure that she meant as much to her husband as he did to her. He thanked her for everything that she did for him, he was kindness itself to her and to all things in his charge, using with consideration all power that life put in his hands. But she thirsted to know that he thanked life that she was herself and his.

When she went out after sunset to make sure that she had closed the henhouse against the foxes, she was amazed by the cold and awed by the brilliance of the stars. The sky was pale with stars, so bright that they were many-coloured, and gazing into it, she saw lesser stars beyond the greater, while the Milky Way shone like blazing hoarfrost. The pale trunks of the box trees and the round, varnished leaves were clearly visible in the starlight and the never-fail flats glittered like rivers of silver.

The perfumed ice of the night smelled of curing hay and she knew that the bitter frost was drying the miles of breast-high kangaroo grass and the silver-green plains of the never-fail and wild cornflowers. She hoped that her husband would have blankets enough where, somewhere, he was camped under the same stars.

NEXT morning, the world was white with frost and the sky seemed bluer than any sky could possibly be. The artesian bore, that poured out its half-million gallons of steaming, mineral-scented water a day to make the miracle of gurgling streams in a dry land, was talking loudly in the stillness, and once again she was glad that it was so close to the house. It was a beautiful and musical thing and it was also her laundry and her bath, for the water, rushing from the eight-inch casing, leapt into a five-feet-deep, ten-feet-square basin lined with box slabs, whence the flow could be directed into the different streams through huge and weathered hollow logs.

Both the interior of the basin and the submerged portions of the logs were covered with the velvety and emerald-green artesian growth that was neither slimy nor unpleasant to the touch, but like a rubber cushioning. The purple-seeded couch grass grew up to the edge of the steaming pool, and the blue and scarlet dragonflies sunned themselves on the logs.

Sometimes, the little silvery fish that crowded the drains flashed up into the basin itself, seemingly immune to the heat. Everything about the bore was virginally clean and she sang this morning as she set the rinsed clothes on the logs.

Night after night the world froze, and day after day the grass was drier; dry at the tops and through the barbed or feathered seedheads, dry to the first joints, dry to the roots in the dry earth. The world whispered and rustled with the papery sound of dryness and Katherine worried about the condition of the pasturage for the sheep. Her husband, she knew, had not expected frost so early and certainly not such frost as this.

The thought of personal danger did not occur to her, for both the boundary lines and the homestead paddocks had firebreaks about them, while the property was far from any main road where careless matches might be dropped, and this was not the season of lightning.

THUS it was with a sense of perfect security that on a night some ten weeks after her husband's departure, she looked out to see if the night was yet dark enough for her to bathe. About her were the miles of night, and as she breathed the icy air, she experienced again the thrill of complete solitude. She, who had been a Londoner, now had no neighbour nearer than fifty miles away! Yet the miles of solitude did not seem alien, only fiercely cold, as she ran to the bore to dip one foot into the water that was, for a moment, too hot and then delicious. Soon she was in the pool, revelling in the rushing embrace of its warmth that was made the more delightful by the frost on her face.

She moved into the gush of the bore itself, letting its force strike her and fling her across the pool. Suddenly she noticed that there was a rosy glow upon her flesh, and that where the water swirled against the edges of the basin, it was lit with dim crimson. She looked up, puzzled, and saw that to the west the sky was lit as if with sunset.

For a moment she believed the light was some false sunset, then, while fire itself was still below the horizon, she knew that the glow came from fire. There was a varying dance to its brightness that no sunset held; now one section of the sky, now another quickened from copper to orange light.

There was about it an infernal quality of menace and advance.

The girl experienced a shock of terror, for here was something with which she did not know how to contend and could not estimate. For the first time she began to weigh the width of the firebreaks against the tinder dryness of the grass. . . . A break that might normally be completely effective might now be vulnerable, for the drifting of a single spark, almost the fierce breath of hot air, would fire the tinder-forests of the grass. This fire was also moving with a vast face—since the whole western sky was lit—and she had heard that great fires created their own wind.

Running to the house, she pulled on her shirt, slacks and jacket, and even in that brief time the glow had grown. Out of the west was also coming a faint drift of hot air; the box leaves whose varnished surfaces picked up the light in rosy stars, stirred faintly to the breeze. She did not need her jacket. She thought of the fire; it must have crossed the boundary breaks. The grass stirred like the scales of a snake, clinking one brittle blade upon another, and she knew it would cross the inner breaks. She stood in a quick moment of decision.

If she left now, she could ride safely along the track that paralleled the face of the fire, reach the mail route and outride the fire. She could turn the bore across the short couch-grass of the yard before she left and hope that it would save the buildings. . . .

But she knew that it would not save the buildings, and each building was a part of her husband's life. Where construction had been almost impossibly difficult for one man, he had somehow solved the difficulties; where money had been lacking, he had compensated for it with persistent, dogged effort; so tired that he could hardly stand, he would regard the final result with pleasure and perhaps say, non-committally, "She's not bad."

She could not have him come home to find his woolshed gone, his finely framed yards gone, his house gone! He loved the two old work horses and the sleek Jersey cow. If she stayed, she might somehow save them all—and she might die. But if she fled she would always think that she might have saved the things that were dear to him and that by flight she had betrayed him.

The fact that he would be uncomplaining in disaster would merely make the thing more terrible to her. He would have lost such an infinity of labour. . . . And he would look at the ruin and light his pipe and prepare to begin again. She could not bear it!

Running to the bore that was her hope, she considered what she could do. The short couch grass extended

NZIE COTTRELL

for some two hundred feet about the house and this she could flood to stop any creeping of the fire. But what of the trees? She had heard that dry box trees burned like torches from the oils in their leaves. And what of the heat from the burning forests of kangaroo grass and gum saplings beyond the clearing? What must she expect of smoke and sparks?

WHEN she had wrestled open the sluice that would flood the couchgrass, she ran through the faint red light to bring the cow and the horses in from the night paddock, and as she ran, the first vanguard of the wild things passed her: six kangaroos, hoping rhythmically out of the west, across the silver wiregrass plain that was now pinkened by reflected light.

They came so close to her that she could see the ruddy glow through the edges of their beautiful ears, and the reflection of the fire on the great, soft eyes as they paused to glance back. Getting the horses and the cow into the small yard behind the house, she was pleased by having to wade through ankle-deep water. The chickens she carried into the house. The ducks evaded her, but she hoped that they would stay near the water and be safe.

Next, she took down the bamboo blinds from the porch, and then turned on the hose and saturated everything inside and outside the house that could by any stretch of imagination burn. The light was now theatrically beautiful and on the lip of the sky a line of jagged gold danced below the tremendous, ever-changing glow. Screeching bird flocks came out of the west, beating towards the eastern stars. But even the stars of the east seemed stained now with rose.

Towards the south, where her way of escape had lain, Katherine saw that the fire had moved across it. She was now alone with the night and the fire. With the road closed, even the thin chance of help was gone. She reminded herself that she had gone through the bombing of London, but there was comfort in facing horror amid millions of one's kind. Her present complete isolation made her feel very small in face of the tremendous thing that advanced against her.

She was also alarmed by the steady rise in temperature. The night was now as hot as a summer day—yet the fire was still many miles distant. The wind, too, was rising, and the smoke-reeling sky seemed to lean and flap towards her like a tossed banner. Within it, copper smoke

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For a moment, she believed the light was some false sunset. She looked around, puzzled. Then she realized

ILLUSTRATED BY HAROLD FORSTER

columns rolled and great pageants of light illuminated higher veils of drifting smoke that were red and palest grey.

The fire itself was still invisible. Somehow, this was more alarming than the actual sight of flames.

She knew she must do more than merely wet down the buildings and flood the grass about them. The house in particular was going to face such heat that her efforts with the hose would be childish. Nor, as the fire came closer, would she be able to use the bore; her chance of life would almost certainly depend upon being able to get into the water and stay there. For the first time she wished that the bore was cold rather than hot. Hot or cold, it was, however, her one chance of saving the house. Its furious pressure equalled many fire hoses. But how could she direct it?

The water sprang horizontally from the casing, and even had she been able to lift or attach an elbow to it, it would not serve her purpose of making the flying water fan over the house. She could not hope to force a partial plug against the casing mouth. Yet there must be some way the thing could be done.

Kneeling by the casing, she examined it closely. The pipe itself ended before it quite reached the pool; it was merely the tearing water that leapt into the catch-basin. If she could fasten trace chains to the vertical part of the casing, fasten a heavy plank to the trace chains, and then drop the plank across the stream of water, she might make it fan savingly over the house.

Running for plank and chains, she wiped the sweat from her eyes and felt the fleeing wildlife all about her: bobbing rabbits, made visible by the white pompons of their tails, kangaroos, passing more rapidly now, red foxes, lolling their pink tongues, a dingo, glancing back in fear.

And always the smoke drove lower, so that it was no longer a reeling sky, but a flying and wavering scud, now almost touching the tree-tops, now lifted by strange whirlpools of ascending air.

SUDDENLY down the clearing against the fierce copper of the running smoke, an eagle came, flying low, the mighty wingspread crimsoned by the low, unearthly light. At the same moment, as if the great bird had been its herald, the fire itself topped the horizon in wildly waving banners of white gold. As instantly, the smoke was down among the trees, acrid, burning and confusing.

For the first time, Katherine could hear the fire as a distant roar, not unlike the sound of surf on a reef, yet more savage: an all-consuming and terrible sound. The heat was becoming painful, drying the hair, bringing discomfort to the skin.

Coughing from smoke and half-blinded by smoke and sweat, she struggled with the chains and the plank. When at last she believed all to be right, she dropped the plank across the leaping force of the water and was amazed by the resulting fountain. To her despair, however, the great fan of water fell short of the house. She saw she must re-adjust the angle of the plank.

When at last the water fell across the face and roof of the house, she ran through the hot smoke and again hosed the cowshed and the roof of the shearing shed. Then, holding a cloth to her face, she dashed back to the bore and edged her way into the hot pool.

She had done all she could. The fate of the house must now depend on the conflicting forces of her improvised fountain and the advancing fire.

"Do I interrupt your ablutions—or have I been forestalled by a competitor?"

Trembling with exhaustion and gasping from the heat of air and water, she was still fascinated by what she saw. One moment the driving veil of smoke concealed everything, the next it lifted so that beneath its wild roof she could watch the destruction of the forest where the wall of fire rolled like a fifty-foot orange surf across the grass. A great tree flared like a torch, sending a firework of sparks and blazing twigs skyward. A ridge of wild hop smouldered sullenly, fanning lilac light. Then the smoke billowed down again.

The water, as she had first entered it, had seemed unendurably hot, but now the heat of the air made her splash it over her face and head for coolness. Sparks came at her and stung her like golden bees. She wondered if she could live in such heat and cowered under the little shelter of an outlet pool. The long, scaled sleekness of snakes began to slither into the pool and the logs, but she had not the energy to attempt to rout them and hardly the energy to fear them. Her whole strength went to the effort of breathing and remaining alive.

Suffocating smoke rolled against the surface of the water, laced by the whirlwind flight of sparks and the hiss of blazing twigs. Then it seemed that pure flame was pouring above her.

She sank beneath the water, coming up only to breathe, and as she breathed the wet cloth across her face scalded her lips. The fountain of the bore, hurling upward into the fiery air, hissed with steam. The panic-stricken snakes slithered across her shoulders, making their way into the log only to find the hollow core a funnel of infernal heat and to thrash their way back into the pool.

She believed she was dying and her heart ached for what her husband must return to find, for it seemed to her impossible that the homestead could be anything but a field of ashes.

No matter how he felt about her he would have a moment of horror at her death, and, since he was a man with a strong sense of responsibility, he might also know lifelong regret that he had brought her to the bush with which she could not contend. In trying to save his home for him she would merely have brought him a great grief.

THE agony of self-reproach and her grief that she would never see her husband again so possessed her that she did not at once realize that the heat was less intense and even the smoke was changing from the smothering frontal smoke of fire to the thin, sweet fragrance of burning logs. Lifting her face at last, she was astonished to see faint stars through the twisting wisps of smoke. Tremblingly, she raised herself and saw that the building still stood, though the timbers were alight in many places. If she were quick, she might still save them.

Staggering over the scattered rubbish of the fire, she circled the buildings, hosing out the little fires. When all seemed safe, she ran to the cowshed and found the cow and the horses terrified but alive, saved by the open ground about the shed and the thick, wet, log walls of the shed itself.

Stumbling along to the verandah steps, she sat down and burst into tears.

When, later, she looked at herself in a mirror, she laughed. Her hair was partially burned, her eyebrows and eyelashes were burned and she was reddened as if by hours of exposure to the sun. Yet she had never been as happy. The homestead was now her present to her husband. She had saved for him the things he valued most. Even the beautiful box trees about the house would come back, for the bore had saved their trunks and roots.

When grey rain came, promising a restored pasturage for the sheep, she dropped on the ash-strewn bed and, soothed by the loud music of raindrops on the iron roof, fell asleep at last.

During the next three days she would wake briefly, stumble sleepily out to milk the cow and feed the chickens, then grope her way to the bed and sleep again.

ON the fourth morning, she was wakened by her husband's voice, shouting her name so strangely and so passionately that she jumped to her feet believing some new disaster upon them. He flung open the door, demanding, "Katherine, are you all right?"

He was streaked with mud, rain and wet ashes, and his soaked clothing clung to his body. He crossed the room to her and gripped her shoulders, "Are you all right?"

She said, "I'm all right. How did you get here?"

"I left the sheep and crossed the range. We heard about the fire. . . . What happened, Katherine? Why didn't you leave?"

She said, "I stayed to look after the homestead."

To her astonishment, she felt that he was trembling with anger. He closed his hands on her shoulders so harshly that she knew her flesh would be bruised. He said, "How dare you do such a crazy thing! It's a miracle you aren't dead. How could you do it? I'll never trust you again."

She stammered. "The homestead, the yards, they would have burned. . . ."

"What do I care if they had burned! . . . I could have come home and you not here." He wheeled away from her to stare at the saved buildings and the blistered trees. "What do you suppose the rest of my life would have been? If I married again . . . if I had children . . . if I had a hundred properties—something would always have said, 'But she didn't live to share it.'"

She said, "You've never told me——"

"Good God! Can't women understand anything but words? A man doesn't sweat for words when he's so darned tired he'd like to be sure he can keep on his feet! Didn't you know I would have liked to stop figuring at night and getting out before dawn—and that I figured and got out because I wanted to make sure you weren't going to be worked ragged and made old? Because I wanted to be sure that there would be something for you if anything should happen to me?"

She went up to him. His shoulders were still hard and angry beneath her hands and she could find no easy way to express the thought that filled her mind. The thought that while words might not mean much without doing, doing could mean any one of a hundred things if it was without words; the thought that the things he had just said were worth more than all the things he had ever done for her.

Instead she could only say, "Men may not think so, but it really was quite important when humanity learned speech."

And now, though his face was still turned from her, the line of his cheek altered and showed the faintest trace of a smile. "All I feel like saying at present is that I would like to strangle you! But to hell with everything, Katherine," he said, "except that you are alive." THE END

Seeing France with Paul the Plasterer

by JEROME WILLIS

In the Café du Haut-Changis, people like Marcel the owner looked on me first with suspicion, then with respect and finally as an old friend. Then, in their own way, they started to show me around

ANYONE WHO HAS watched the stooped, patient figures along the banks of the Seine, even in the heart of Paris, knows that fishing seems to be second nature to a Frenchman. I've never seen them catch anything there, and I believe that many of them expect nothing, apart from the silent contemplation of the water. For it's a type of sport (or idleness) that appeals to a Frenchman's character. Normally he uses up so much of himself in gesture and speech that perhaps fishing is a necessary repose, where neither speech nor gesture is wanted.

But when eight or nine hundred fishermen sit round a lake, all bent on the same task, it is unlikely that the habitual silence is adhered to. And this is what happens in the springtime on the banks of the great ornamental lake in the grounds of the Château of Fontainebleau, where once upon a time kings used to fish.

It was a local character, known as Paul the Plasterer, who led me to witness this extraordinary event when I was staying at Avon, a village on the fringe of the forest.

Avon is a self-contained little village, and from the peculiar distrust with which the locals regard even Parisians you would think it was a hamlet, buried deep in the heart of the country, instead of a village barely forty miles from the capital. But then Avon regards all strangers with suspicion, and much more so foreigners.

When I turned up there in the winter, strange rumours began to circulate. Was I a member of the British Intelligence Service, seeking what strange secrets Avon held, or an atomic scientist?

At the Café du Haut-Changis heads were turned when I went in for a drink. I was regarded first with suspicion, then with respect because I lodged in an old château nearby, and finally as an old friend to whom each and every one wanted to tell his story.

It was January when I got there and the snow in the woods was turning to puddles and the magpies beginning to gather. As the daffodils bloomed and strange migrant birds came back to the forest, which burst out into dazzling shades of green, the Café du Haut-Changis thawed, too, and I got to know all the locals.

Guarding Village Secrets

Marcel was the first to talk to me. As the *patron* of the little café, with its zinc bar and wooden bench running round the walls, at first he used only to serve my drink with a casual greeting, or even silence. When he was finally satisfied that I was doing nothing more secret than writing, and that I lived in the old château almost opposite his café, he opened up to me.

That is, he opened up in the limited way Normans do. He had come from his native Normandy during the war and was a strong Conservative. He was very anxious that I should get a good impression of France, as represented by his village, and silenced any customer quietly if he thought village secrets were being given away.

As the village meeting place, the café was naturally the centre for gossip, and it was several weeks before I was allowed to participate in this. Previously I noticed that conversation changed from the particular to the general as I entered. Paul the Plasterer broke down all this.

Marcel had represented Paul to me as a typical French citizen who had become embittered by his long years of imprisonment in Germany, and therefore any peculiar political theories he held had their source therein. As a strict Conservative, Marcel disliked any flight into a dream world that he could not understand. Whereas Paul, as a kind of anarchist, was prepared to try anything once so long as it offered him some advantage.

He looked rather like a tortoise; that is a tortoise when its head emerges from its shell and peers round curiously. He had a completely bald head, the result of some illness he had contracted while he was in Germany. His pate was, in fact, shiny from the back of his neck to his eyebrows. And, since he usually wore green overalls that an American Army lorry driver had given him, he looked like a German prisoner. One day I got

Marcel laughs at one of Paul the Plasterer's jokes. Soon Marcel opened up to me—except on one subject

Café du Haut-Changis in Avon's main street. For a long time the gossip ceased abruptly whenever I came in

him to talk about his life as a prisoner. The story was totally different from the one Marcel related.

Paul told me he was taken prisoner on the Meuse in 1940 and sent to Hanover. When he got there they asked him what his trade was. "Well," said Paul, "I had been a general labourer all my life and I had always wanted to be a bricklayer and plasterer. So I told them I was a plasterer. Then they asked me to build air-raid shelters. From there I went on to bricklaying. But while I was bricklaying and plastering I got to know a lot of people. One of them told me he used to do a bit of lorry driving in the evening. His job was to carry the German loot (champagne and all sorts of wines) arriving at the station from France.

"So I became his mate and learned to drive a lorry. After a few months I had a considerable cellar of my own," he concluded with his tortoise-like smile, as he sipped his red wine. "On the whole it wasn't a bad little business. I made a fair profit, and I had a lot of wine to drink."

His Taste Of Jail

Paul had no inhibitions and no class consciousness. One day we were sitting on the bench outside Marcel's café sunning ourselves, when a respectable-looking bourgeois citizen passed. Though Paul was in his cement-stained overalls and the other had pin-striped trousers, stiff collar and black coat, a warm greeting passed between them. Paul's face slid into a smile as I raised my eyebrows. "We're old friends, him and me," he grinned. "We did a spell in jail together."

I expressed surprise, and Paul went on: "We were partners in the black market together. I knew farmers who had pigs to sell at a good profit. And he knew a lot of people who wanted them. During the winter of last year I was absent from Marcel's for a couple of months." He grinned. "Well, that's when I was doing my stretch in the local jail. Of course, there's no hope of doing that now. Everything's getting so legal. Even plastering isn't what it was."

It was through Paul that I really got to know most of the local characters, because while Marcel, the *patron* of the café, wanted me to know only the best side of everyone, Paul was determined I should also know their worst side. So when Marcel introduced me to Prosper, a concierge at a local château, Paul whispered: "Prosper's an Auvergnan, and that's meaner than a Scotsman. If you get a drink out of him you can put it in your book."

Prosper was a little grey-haired man in the early fifties, with all the toughness of his native Auvergne in his arms and legs. He took me over the rambling seventeenth-century house, where he acted as concierge.

Ghost In The Convent

"This house has a history," said Prosper, swinging the gates open proudly. "It was first built as a convent. I don't know when—some stone in the backyard says 1658. When the Germans came they put their 'Strength Through Joy' people here, most of 'em huge women."

We wandered through the corridors of the first floor. "See those," said Prosper. He pointed to some gross and crudely drawn pictures. "The 'Strength Through Joy' people put them there to replace what they had stolen." He spat with disgust.

He led me to the third floor which, with its narrow corridors and tiny, cell-like rooms, still resembled a convent. He threw open another door. "That's the haunted room," he said. "They say a nun went mad there, and one can still hear screams at night. Not even the 'Strength Through Joy' people slept there."

At the Café du Haut-Changis another night we started talking about the haunted room and whether there were ghosts or not. Paul pushed his tortoise head between Prosper and me. "I'll sleep there, Prosper, if you'll let me have it rent free."

Prosper set his lips and refused to answer this. But Paul was insistent. "Well, let Père Chêne sleep there, and leave his igloo in the woods. Anyhow he works for you," he remarked. There was a bellow of disgust from the back of the bar, and I turned round to see a hairy-chested old man who said he wouldn't leave the woods if they let him have the Château of Fontainebleau itself.

Père Chêne had retired to the woods because he said he wouldn't have to pay taxes. He built himself a little hut of tree branches, filled in the spaces with mud and grass and moved in with his tin trunk, which contained everything from his birth certificate to his divorce documents, and his Croix de Guerre. Every Saturday night he came into the café for a few glasses of red wine and a game of *belotte*.

As spring ripened and a chorus of nightingales filled the woods every night, Marcel softened and began to relate more of the local history. He revealed a few secrets of illicit loves, but there was one subject on which he remained a closed book. That was the exact happenings in the village on the two days before Liberation.

But one night I got a clue. Pierre, the dark-haired, brooding mechanic at a local garage, had done good work, so I was told, for the Resistance during the Occupation. Some news about America and Russia displeased him, and he came into the café saying he was sure that America wanted to fight Russia.

Prosper sniggered. Pierre called him a capitalist. Prosper still sniggered. Pierre called him a reactionary. Prosper scoffed. Pierre said he was a mere tool of the Big Trusts. Prosper laughed loudly.

Then Pierre, as a final thrust, hurled at him: "You're a fascist, you're like Monsieur So and So."

Prosper unfolded his arms. It was a new Prosper, a Prosper with blazing blue eyes. "Am I like Monsieur So and So?" There was an ominous silence in the café before Pierre blurted out: "Yes, you are, the very spit of him." Then the mix-up started, and Marcel pushed them outside to finish it in the roadway.

When I mentioned the incident to Paul the Plasterer, the next day, he willingly revealed the story. The man referred to as "Monsieur So and So" was the local *curé* during the Occupation, who was shot by the Resistance groups. Paul revealed all the graphic details of the shooting. Apparently the *curé* had been in liaison with Laval's militia. So the Resistance movement went out to get him the day the Germans left. They chased him through the church to the Sacristy, cornered him there, and shot him with Sten guns. Pierre, apparently, had been with them.

"But then there was a lot of killing in France during that period, m'sieu," said Paul, carelessly. "I was glad to be away from it all in Germany. It was nice and peaceful where I was."

Easter came with chestnut blossom and lilac, and hikers wandered down our narrow village street on their way to the forest. Up on the hill, the white stone of the little old church gleamed against a cloudless blue sky. And sitting on the bench outside Marcel's café was Paul, as usual with his cynical grin as he watched the tourists gazing curiously round them. "*Bon jour*, m'sieu Willis," he greeted me. "You know, I think all Parisians are mad, but if you want to see some of the maddest, come with me."

Nightmare For Referees

He led me across the railway up the hill, and into the grounds of the château. And there were eight or nine hundred fishermen from Paris, lining the banks of the lake. There was about three feet between each competitor, and the equipment they had with them was very varied.

There were those who had brought neat little bags to hold their fish, and *chic* camp stools to sit on. There were others with tins to hold whatever fish they might catch, and they just sat on the grass. There were also those who had brought their wives with them. Paul explained that they were the clever ones. Because the wife, though feigning to be asleep, watched carefully to see that her husband's neighbour didn't do a quick conjuring trick with the fish.

There was one referee to every six fishermen to see that no monkey business went on. He was a busy man. Every time a fish was hooked, the competitor had to cry out. Sometimes two or three people cried out at once. And the referees did little war dances trying to check the fish.

"You see," said Paul. "This is a very French sport. No one sticks to the rules except the referee. *Ça, c'est France, mon vieux.*" THE END

THE HUMAN MACHINE *by ROFFE THOMPSON*

Don't be an Old Fogey

IF someone called you an Old Fogey, you might well be annoyed, especially if you had looked up "fogey" and discovered that it means "moss-grown." Yet there are any number of people with moss-grown minds.

You can be an Old Fogey at eighty—or at eighteen. You become one when you are afraid of a new fact or a new idea because it means reconsidering your established habits of thought. "In the majority of human beings," wrote a famous psychologist, "Old Fogeyism begins at about twenty-five."

You have been warned. Whatever your age, watch that moss.

VOYAGE OF THE GILCA

Continued from page 17

made the suggestion that I have his half of the liver in exchange for my half of the intestines. The liver of a seagull is naturally only a small organ, but considering the "goodness" it contained, as compared with the intestines, I readily agreed to the swap.

The enamel mugs were full, each containing a leg, sweetbread, wing, half the fat on the tail end of the spine, and half the head and ribs. Between grunts and swallows we laughed and joked, telling each other we would never forget how wonderful raw seagull tasted, and ever and anon our bloodstained hands would grasp another tasty morsel from our respective mugs.

And that night we ate our third bird, and hoped we should soon be able to shoot another, but we were doomed to disappointment. Nine days passed by, and still no bird arrived. In thirty days we had had three seagulls between us, and now we were more dead than alive.

Handing the tiller to Hall this particular morning, I reminded him that tomorrow we should see land; it was the only cheerful thing I could think of; and when tomorrow arrived, the tenth day after turning the boat back to Java, our seventieth since setting out from Enggano, I spent an hour very carefully scanning the horizon, as I felt sure we must be near land. Turning to Hall, I had to admit that no land was visible, but that perhaps it was covered by the haze, though neither of us could see any haze.

Hall Kept Silent

I did not like the morose silence of my companion, and tried to get him to give a reason why no more gulls had come our way; and for a little while we talked, asking why the birds were frightened. What had scared them off?

Not another word would he say, except, "Leave me alone, Skipper; I'll get over it." These nine extra days of starvation seemed to be getting him down more than the full twenty days before. The awful gnawing at one's vitals was now almost beyond bearing.

Our buttocks were so thin and bony that it was impossible to sit for long at the tiller even on a folded blanket, so, as the breeze was constant and from the same quarter, the rudder was lashed and, dragging the thin, miserable things which used to be my legs over the thwart, I stood clinging to the mast the better to scan the horizon for land. This was about 1 p.m. the following day.

Suddenly something made me turn round. Perhaps it was the wind, or perhaps a small noise, but there was Hall feeling in his haversack, and when he withdrew his hand it contained his revolver, which I knew to be loaded. I misinterpreted the look on his face. I thought it told me precisely what he was thinking and exactly what he was going to do.

We were in a very tough spot, and I, too, had wondered if it was not the best way out. Still, in an hour a bird might come and perch on our bowsprit, or we might sight land. A thousand reasons flashed through my mind why it was the wrong way as I clambered back and came up beside him and placed my hand on the weapon.

I said the one word, "Jack." We looked at each other for a moment; then he said, "It's all right, Skipper; I wasn't going to do that." The tension which had existed between us for the past three days was over.

He climbed into the tiller cockpit and I followed to see what he intended to do. He fired at a large fish that appeared to be about three feet below the surface of the sea; nothing happened, so he fired again, but the fish swam along quite undisturbed.

Then, placing the revolver barrel in the water, he fired twice in quick succession. There was a loud detonation and I saw Hall's hand jerk up, and the barrel was split for the greater part of its length, sufficient for us to see the two bullets jammed up one against the other. I thanked heaven my revolver was still in commission, and when I looked into the water, there was the fish swimming along as unconcernedly as ever, while we had lost a revolver and four valuable rounds of ammunition.

Two very long days later, I managed to shoot another bird. It was a particularly small gull and merely whetted our appetites, and our craving stomachs caused us to turn our attention to a shark which was following the boat. If we could get it to come sufficiently close to us, there was a possibility of shooting it. This would provide our bare cupboard with food for days.

Search For The Shark

The sail was lowered and the shark gained on us. At twenty yards I fired, hoping for a lucky hit, but it did not seem to be affected.

It was only after the third shot that it turned away and left us. We were convinced it had been hit and very badly wounded, so the sea-anchor rope was put over in the hope that within an hour or so the fish would come floating, belly up, to the surface.

After searching the surrounding water for some three hours we were forced to the conclusion that it was not dead, and reluctantly got under way again. While Hall steered, I cleaned the revolver and prepared to load it ready for use.

The ammunition was kept in our respective haversacks, and our disappointment was terrible when we turned them both out and found only one round—the last round. I silently damned Hall for firing at the fish and damned myself for the shark-shooting episode, but realized that all the condemnation in the world would not bring back the ammunition.

That night was one of the most horrible we experienced. It was a Sunday evening, and the light was just beginning to fade when another of our white and grey winged saviours came out of the sky. This bird seemed wary, and circled round the boat several times, making us dreadfully afraid it was not going to land. With the saliva forming in our mouths, we lay absolutely motionless, hoping and waiting.

It was getting rapidly darker when the bird finally dropped on the bowsprit, and I dared not waste any time in drawing a "bead" on it or the light would beat me, and the gull kept rising a foot or so as though it realized that our boat was not a healthy spot. Immediately before the striker pin came against the firing cap of our last round, the bird spread its wings; but before it could leave the bowsprit, the tell-tale dark round hole appeared in its shoulder.

It fell into the sea, dead, some five feet from *Gilca*, and though we touched it with the oars we could not draw it in. The current appeared to be taking it away from us very rapidly, so we put the boat about in an endeavour to pick it up. For an hour or more we tacked about for that floating bunch of feathers which meant so much to us, but in the darkness that was now night, the quest was hopeless and we put the boat back on her course.

This, so far, seemed to be our blackest day; we had had food within our grasp and missed it. Somewhere out there on the water floated a dead seagull. That night we cried ourselves to sleep, having tried to console each other that we really did not want *that* bird anyhow; but what worried me most was the fact that we had no more ammunition.

During the early hours I awakened and looked up at the sky. Night at sea always amazed me, as it was possible to see anything in the boat at any hour of the night. My eyes travelled round and came to rest on the mast, which seemed to have become longer.

I began to wonder if I were still asleep, for on the top reposed a seagull, or a ghost of one, and, daring to look away, I lowered my eyes to Hall's recumbent figure and touched him ever so lightly. He awakened. I whispered, asking him to look on top of the mast.

We rolled back our blankets like automatons, rose together and, with a tap on my chest and a quick effort at pantomime, I indicated that I, being much the lighter, would climb up the mast. Hall nodded and imitated pushing me up to let me know he understood. We felt we dare not talk.

Gull Was Frantic

The boat was swaying, and I had some little difficulty in getting started with the climbing. Standing on the thwart together, I stretched as high as I could and gripped the mast, while Hall pushed like a Trojan. Then near the top I stretched out an arm, and, measuring the last few inches, put an additional spurt into my climbing and with fingers extended gripped the bird's legs.

I thought nothing could have made me release the grip I had on that bird; though it pecked my hand unmercifully, they were mere kisses to me. The bird created an awful din, and, delirious with happiness, I tried to shout the joyful news to my friend that I had got it, as though he did not know.

He let my feet go, and I came hurtling down the mast with a searing pain down the middle of my naked body, due to leaving a considerable amount of skin on it; and I was glad Hall took the gull from me before I was halfway down, otherwise I might have let the bird go, the pain was so intense. We had got another meal! Making our happy way to the tiller cockpit we cut off the bird's head and went through our usual procedure.

The rest of that night was spent in an orgy of feeding. It was a regular blood bath, and we were happy again, particularly because we had proved that seagulls could be caught by hand, provided the hunter was not visible to the bird.

The following morning we were able to test that theory. While finishing the remnants of our "mast" gull we had the exciting experience of watching two gulls flying round the boat at a very low altitude and, after several reconnoitring swoops, they finally landed on the bowsprit about 6.30 a.m.

Hall, who is taller than I and has a much longer reach, crawled up to the tiny foredeck and remained hidden. The birds were jockeying with each other for the best position, and, cautiously following Hall, I very slowly let down the sail which my companion proceeded to pull over him with only a small spy hole through which to watch our prospective dinner.

A Sudden Grab

They were decidedly nervous birds, but with commendable caution Hall "stayed put" for what seemed ages, and the birds, which were within two feet of him, gained their natural composure and after a time started cleaning under their wings, performing what we called delousing operations. Every little movement my friend made caused the sail to heave, and the gulls would remain motionless, watching the undulations until they were convinced it was only the wind.

Waiting until the nearest bird had its head under the wing farthest away from him, Hall's scraggy arm came from under the canvas sail like a flash and closed upon the tail

Jackson Hall, the *Gilca's* "mate" on her epic sea voyage, sets out on a safer journey—he now runs a car-hire service in Leeds

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VOYAGE OF THE GILCA

Continued from previous page

feather of a frightened, screaming seagull. Its mate flew round and finally made off in the direction in which we were sailing.

At eleven fifty another gull circled the boat. Lowering the sail, Hall crouched under it, ready to grab in case the gull should decide to land.

My Running Commentary

I gave him a running commentary on what the bird was doing. In a very soft undertone he was informed: "She's over the port side; now she's circling forward; she's coming in, be careful; the blasted thing has landed on top of the mast." Then a long silence, and again: "She's taken off and seems to be coming round to the bowsprit."

From Hall came the reply: "I wish she'd hurry up; I've got t'bloody cramp."

"Careful, Jack," I said, "she's coming in to land." The gull shot over the boat and came to rest on the bowsprit. As his arm came out to grab the gull, it took off again, circled once, and then made a bee-line again in the direction in which we were sailing.

A very stiff and irate Hall came out from his hiding-place, rubbing his very lean joints, because for fully three-quarters of an hour he had been crouching, hardly daring to breathe. At 2.30 p.m. another gull was sighted; and this time I successfully tried my skill with Hall giving the commentary. Lunch was prepared and eaten.

It was during the final phase of the meal that we had the idea of eating the gull's eye. Turning the glassy orb over, we put a small slit into the back of the eye, when a slightly purplish liquid appeared. On tasting it, we found it quite pleasant, if a little peculiar.

I am not quite sure whether it was the fifteenth or sixteenth of July that for us was a great day, but I do know that exactly at 6.30 a.m. we saw two birds flying in company with a straggler behind, all of them making a bee-line for our boat. In a flash Hall was under the sail and gave me the signal he was ready.

The commentary took place as before, and one gull had no sooner landed than Hall had it. He had not had time to pull it in when bird number two landed.

I Wrung Its Neck

The first gull was screaming its head off and making a terrific row, while the second one, completely mystified by its mate's antics, came nearer and nearer as if wanting to help its companion. Hall had recovered himself by this time and had changed hands on bird one, and with a lightning movement grabbed and captured bird two. I went to his assistance, and from under the canvas he handed the first to me.

I had not very much time to do anything; the axe and knife were in the cockpit (our slaughter-house); and there was Hall holding one screaming bird while I held another; and amid all the din he was shouting to me to wring its neck. I had never wrung a bird's neck before, but I screwed that gull's neck round with all my strength. I felt no "give," as Hall said I should, but the bird looked dead enough to me, and, throwing it quickly down as gull three came in to land, I prepared to help with gull two.

Hall repeated his tactics, holding the screaming bird on the sprit until the third landed, and was captured. He then passed number two back for me to do some more neck-wringing. I did not like the job, for I did not feel as competent with my hands as with the axe.

Hall emerged from the hideout just in time to see gull one (whose neck I had wrung) preparing to fly away, but he dropped on it, and with our three screaming birds, clambered aft to the cockpit. Here they were quickly decapitated, and, whilst a magnificent feast was being prepared (this time a bird each, as well as one in reserve) I hoisted sail and put *Gilca* back on her course. Altogether a very successful morning; we had scored the "possible" three out of three.

Chewing hard on a piece of bone, and with his eye on the time for the next arrival, Hall suggested we put up another perch just above the canvas covering of the cockpit. I was ready to agree to anything in my amiable state of fullness, and as soon as the meal was over, a new perch was improvised by lashing a cross-piece to one of the oars, and the contraption fixed amid much laughter and chaff about our setting up in the wholesale business.

Out Went My Hand

If the birds would only land on the perch, we could catch them much more easily. The work was completed by 11 a.m., and we eagerly awaited the arrival of any gulls that might be around. Wishing to test the new perch thoroughly, we had not lowered the sail, and *Gilca*, putting her best foot forward, was racing along at some three knots.

Exactly at eleven thirty a dark shadow swooped past the end of the awning, and on looking up I saw the tail feathers of a gull projecting beyond the canvas hood. This was easy; out went my hand and in came the screaming bird; but in my excitement I had not seen Hall creeping forward to another gull perched on the bowsprit. It became alarmed, either at the screaming gull which I held, or at seeing Hall; it flew away.

The sail was lowered and both perches covered; five minutes later the bird returned and chose the bowsprit and death. In all, eight birds were caught that day. We skinned them all, and ate such dainties as the liver and sweetbread forthwith.

It was fortunate we had so much food on board, as the night brought the end of the long spell of fine weather we had experienced, and foam-topped waves came crashing into the boat once more.

Took Turns Baling

This storm seemed worse than the others. Perhaps we had become weaker. If we were to survive, a different system of baling would have to be instituted, so it was arranged that one must rest and the other must bale, otherwise, if a large wave swamped the boat when both were utterly worn out, we could write *finis* to the voyage.

The new system was put into operation and worked quite well for a time, but on the third day of the storm we were so weary that we agreed to let the boat fill with water before starting to bale her, and take the risk of the odd wave swamping us.

In this way we obtained an appreciable amount of rest with the appropriate risk, because, had we shipped a heavy sea just as the boat was full and we were about to start baling, we could not have survived.

NEXT WEEK: The Last Terrible Lap

Colonel Perry examines one of his charges. Just before each meeting, every dog racing is carefully checked

Dog-track Vet

by RICHARD COLLIER

His greyhounds are often temperamental stars. But it's the war against the nobblers and dopers that causes him most worry

BACK IN THE YEARS before the first World War, a young vet with a flourishing practice at Eastbourne used 'to enliven his leisure hours by running a small greyhound coursing club on nearby Pevensey Marshes, in company with a few close friends.

"It's such a pleasant change from work," he once confided to a colleague, "because the greyhounds are so wonderfully straightforward. They need less looking after than any dog I've come across."

The vet in question, a mild, softly spoken six-footer named Colonel Ernest Middleton Perry, has since had good reason to modify his first impressions. As one of the eighty-odd top-line vets who are in more or less constant attendance at tracks licensed by the Greyhound Racing Association, the colonel is currently personal physician, surgeon and, on occasion, pathologist to more than 200 of the temperamental star performers housed at Wembley Stadium kennels—"a sort of canine cross," as one fan has put it, "between Lord Horder and Sir Bernard Spilsbury."

In the course of his twenty-seven years at Wembley, Perry, now in his sixties, has carried out meticulous daily inspections of more than 300,000 greyhounds, though it is doubtful whether many of those dogs ever appeared before the public for more than half an hour in the course of an entire month. But a vet, says Perry, "is one of the few people around the track who *can't* afford to take a chance—although, on occasions, of course, even that becomes necessary."

One particular occasion cropped up quite recently, when a well-known tracker named Dallas, belonging to Lady Elvin, the wife of Wembley's chief, finished one hotly contested race by breaking its hock. In the racing world, eighty per cent of such cases are automatically written off, but Perry, deciding that he would take a chance, inserted a silver splint not much wider than a hair between the injured tissues of the bitch's leg. Exactly three months later, Dallas was romping home by a good lead in the first race for which she was entered.

Although, in theory, Perry need only attend at Wembley four times a week—for trials of up to two hours in length on Mondays and Wednesdays, and for two-hour meetings on Mondays and Fridays—in practice he usually divides his time fairly equally between the track and his private dog-hospital at Wimbledon. Recently, when the greater proportion of the Wembley greyhounds were stricken with gastric 'flu, he worked non-stop at the kennels for four days and four nights until he succeeded in stemming the epidemic.

In contrast to his original dictum, Perry now emphasizes that the average racing greyhound needs all the unwavering care and attention that a vet can afford to give it. Race night "nerves" and an unvaried training diet, coupled with the less resilient constitution of the present-day breeds, can tax a dog's stamina to the uttermost, so that a dog which raced well on Friday night and appeared to be in fine fettle may have contracted haemorrhitic enteritis and died of exhaustion by noon on Saturday.

Out of the dozen-odd dogs that normally make up his sick list, Perry finds that distemper and diarrhoea are by far the most common complaints, though pneumonia often follows a close third. Strained toe joints, cramp, sprains and strained shoulder muscles, of course, are a common aftermath of every race, although ailments, on an average, rarely account for more than a small proportion of the annual running costs of the kennels, exclusive of the vet's salary.

Fair Deal For Backers

On race days, Perry's routine is dictated largely by the precautions taken at all G.R.A. tracks to ensure that every dog loosed from the traps shall be at least worthy of the money that the punters have staked on it. At Wembley, the ordinary training kennels are divided into five ranges, each in charge of a trainer and holding anything up to fifty dogs.

Two hours before the meeting the sixty-odd dogs involved are removed to carefully guarded racing kennels behind ten feet of floodlit wire fencing. Here, after their weights and identities have been checked, Perry puts them through a detailed examination, a process which is repeated two minutes prior to the actual race and two minutes afterwards.

"Mostly," Perry says, "I look for the same sort of thing as a doctor would look for in a human being—bright eyes, erect carriage, a clean tongue." Hind legs and toes are equally important; a dog with long hare-like paws is particularly prone to injury.

A dog's temperature, at normal, should be stable at 101.5, with a regular pulse of 88 and a weight of anything between 58 lb. and 78 lb. (with 64 lb. as a good average). After a thirty-second 525-yard sprint, however the temperature may increase to 104, with an accelerated pulse of 95 and a loss of anything up to ¾ lb. in weight. Should a dog show a weight discrepancy of more than 2 lb. since its previous race, it is invariably withdrawn from the race and given a special trial on its own afterwards.

On Guard Against Crooks

Like most track vets, Perry's chief preoccupation is the unceasing war that he wages against every known type of dog-doper. That such incidents have been remarkably few during his years at the track is largely due to his own watchword: "You've got to be on the look-out *all* the time, because you never know what they will try next."

Most of the methods employed by dog-track crooks have, in course of time, become well known, although occasionally variations will arise. Formerly, for example, the favourite methods for speeding a dog up were benzedrine, aspirin, caffein and digitalin, but Perry knew of one vet who quite recently isolated a gritty substance from a dog's food which turned out to be gunpowder. His colleagues were inclined to be sceptical on this point until he carefully isolated the charge and tossed it on to a nearby bonfire.

Slowing-down methods, by contrast, are often not easy to detect

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No one can measure the relief felt by a mother on hearing the doctor's reassuring words. Even the most carefully cherished baby *can* pick up an infection, and it is then that the strength of the child is tested to the limit.

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OH, JOHNNY! by TIM

DOG TRACK VET

Continued from previous page

until after the race is over, and the racketeers have already pocketed their winnings. "Choking" a dog, for example—feeding it a few pounds of raw meat half an hour before the race—is one fairly safe ruse, although on one occasion a suspicious vet gave the dog a salt-and-water emetic, so that it won the race instead. Another favourite standby of the dopers is bicarbonate of soda, which tends to produce "wind."

The commonest slowing-down drugs are chloretone, a white crystalline compound of chloroform and acetic acid, which acts as a hypnotic, a similar substance known as chlorbutol, and luminal. Like most other drugs, these are usually detected through a urine test at the close of the race, which can be applied for by either the stewards or the trainer. Sometimes the dopers administer the drug some days beforehand, so that the dog, though still "off-form," reacts negatively to tests.

Another form of trickery for which a vet must be constantly on the watch is "nobbling." For this reason, Perry always makes a careful examination of a dog's paws prior to a race; a clever "nobbler" may have inserted chewing gum between the dog's toe-pads or bound its toe-nails with thin cotton.

Doping May Be Bungled

Once the dog has left the kennels, of course, the vet's responsibility ends; he can do nothing to prevent an unscrupulous official greasing the floor of the traps to hamper the dog's getaway, or over-tightening the straps of its muzzle.

Occasionally, through haste or inexperience, a doper's accomplice may bungle the job. In one recent case, a kennel lad, trying to slip the favourite a dose of chlorbutol, failed to realize that, while three or four capsules would do the trick, less would have the opposite effect. He gave it one capsule just before the big race, which it promptly won by a short head.

On another occasion, the dopers were using belladonna ointment, a small quantity of which, placed just inside the corners of the eyelids, not only dilates the pupils but blurs the vision. But they overdid their work to such an extent that the dog, on leaving the trap, stumbled round in circles as if drunk.

Sometimes a vet may find himself in a predicament because he knows in advance that a dog is going to be doped. Perry, on one occasion, was informed that a kennel-maid on the Wembley staff had been approached by a notorious gang of dog-dopers. She went to the police, who suggested that she should play along with the crooks—even to administering the dope. On the night of the race, Perry had somehow to find a convincing reason for scratching the dog.

A cold wind that happened to be blowing saved the situation; when the dog came up for inspection, one of its eyes was watering slightly. "I don't think he's too happy about the race," Perry told the astonished head lad. "The poor old lad's crying. We'll put him away and give him a trial later."

Suspicions, however, were allayed, and it was not until the dopers met their "accomplice" outside the track—and were arrested—that they realized anything was wrong.

Disguise Is Difficult

Substitution of one dog for another, or "placing a ringer," is, in Perry's estimation, even less easy than doping. There are few ways of disguising a dog that will stand up to track contingencies.

Once, for example, a steward who was fastening a racing jacket on a greyhound found his hands smeared with black paint. Few officials swallowed the trainer's story that it was "ointment"—although, in this connection, track vets have sometimes slipped up. One who pronounced a brown patch on a dog's underside to be dye was later forced to retract in a court of law. It was a perfectly harmless liniment.

On another occasion, the track officials were convinced, through certain peculiarities of gait, that a likely looking jet-black newcomer was in reality a fawn dog that had mysteriously vanished some weeks earlier. Its running only increased their suspicions, though tests showed no traces of dye.

They remembered, however, that even when a woman has had her hair dyed, the natural colour of the roots will still make itself apparent after a time, so they decided to keep the dog for a few weeks. Shortly afterwards the discomfited trainer was trying to claim a dog that was already three-quarters fawn again.

After such tests of his ingenuity as these, Perry still confesses that one aspect of the game puzzles him. "What pleasure the dogs get," he says, "in chasing a bit of rabbit-skin round the track night after night, beats me. If I ever discover the answer to that one, I *will* retire happy." THE END

THE MURDERS IN GODOLPHIN SQUARE

Continued from page 8

"Mary Winship. It's a pretty name. I never knew what it was. All I knew was she lived at 22 Godolphin Square. I came to see her here a couple of times, but I got cold feet just outside the door. I hung around, hoping she'd come out, but she never did. Then my outfit shoved off and I never got back to England again. I guess I'd have got up nerve enough if we'd stuck around a little longer, but just an ordinary G.I. punk ringing the bell and asking, 'Can I see the girl with dreamy lashes and curly hair?' I guess I figured I'd get booted out on my impertinent rear."

He gave Mr. Pinkerton a quietly amused smile. "So, thanks a lot, pal. I'll shove along now, but I'll be seeing you. McGrath's my name — Dan McGrath."

"Pinkerton's mine."

Dan McGrath turned to go, and turned back. "By the way, Mr. Pinkerton, do you know if her father ever came back?"

"Her father?" Mr. Pinkerton looked at him blankly. "I—I didn't know she had a father. I mean, I thought her mother was a—a widow. I thought her father had been dead a great many years. In fact, I'm quite sure of it. Miss Caroline Winship told me so herself. You're sure—I mean, we're talking about the same girl, aren't we?"

"I don't know, Mr. Pinkerton." Dan McGrath was pleasant and imperturbable. "All I know is she lived at 22 Godolphin Square. I met her in an air-raid shelter. That was in forty-three. She was with her cousin, and they'd got separated. I held her hand all night."

"Oh," Mr. Pinkerton said. His shattered illusions quickly annealed themselves together again. Dan McGrath was human after all. He could hold a girl's hand. He could also grin. He did so now, and set off up the road.

Mr. Pinkerton stood blinking after him for a moment before he turned and scurried happily across the square, his heart fluttering with excitement like the dun-coloured wings of a moth rising from a dusty floor.

INSIDE the door and halfway up the first flight of green carpeted stairs, Mr. Pinkerton remembered Miss Caroline Winship. Eternally watching from her window, she must have seen him talking to the American in front of her ruined house. He started hastily down again. It was too late. Pegott, the permanent valet, materialized from the shadowy recesses of the lower hall, was blocking his way, his customary insolence more thinly veiled than usual.

"Miss Winship would like to speak to you."

He had dropped the "sir" a few days after he came to No. 4 Godolphin Square and had had an opportunity to inspect Mr. Pinkerton's belongings, which were as meagre and unimpressive as their owner. He had small, close-set, green-blue eyes that seldom met anybody's directly, but he was able to stare down the little grey man with a superciliousness that Mr. Pinkerton had no defence against.

"I'll see Miss Winship later." It took unusual courage for Mr. Pinkerton to say it, but say it he did. "I'm going out now," he added stoutly. He adjusted his steel-rimmed spectacles and tried to sound as adamant as possible.

"Miss Winship saw you come in," Pegott said carelessly. "I'm going off, and I wouldn't want Miss Winship to think I'd not given you her message. She's ordered up tea especially for you. I'm sure she wouldn't want it wasted."

Mr. Pinkerton blinked. "Well . . ." he said, "well, I expect I can go out later."

He turned and trudged unhappily back up the stairs. The permanent valet stood where he was, not attempting to disguise the smirk on his face. And Miss Caroline Winship was waiting in her doorway, determined, imperious, her heavy cheeks raddled with bitterness.

"Come in here." She crooked a bony forefinger in a peremptory summons. "Close the door. Put your hat on the chair. Don't stand there fiddling with it. Who was that man over there at my house? What does he want? Don't try any tricks with me. If he's another of those Town and Country Planning people I'll call my solicitor. Answer me immediately! Don't stand there gaping! Answer me!"

Mr. Pinkerton was indeed standing there gaping, but his mind was busily at work.

Oh, dear, she's dreadful, he was thinking rapidly. She's really dreadful. He had never thought of her as particularly pleasant, but she had always covered up the corrosive vitriol that was working now like an evil ferment in her thick lips and quivering nostrils. She was frightening. The rouge on her cheeks stood out in dull purple splotches, and her brown eyes flashed under their heavy, twitching lids. A heavy-set, large-boned, dominant woman, she always made Mr. Pinkerton feel even smaller and scrawnier than he was.

"Answer me!" she said.

"He's—he's not. He wasn't at all," Mr. Pinkerton stammered. His hands were trembling. A mild flush of adrenalin, diluted at best, was all that enabled him to answer her without his voice trembling, too. "He's not from the Town and Country Planning people at all. He's from America. He's just over here on—on a visit."

"A visit? What for? Is he another of their antique dealers trying to buy my staircase and mantel? If he is, tell him they're not——"

"No, no," Mr. Pinkerton said hastily. "He's not trying to buy anything. He was just looking."

For some reason that he had not put into words, he would rather have cut his tongue out than tell her what Dan McGrath was really looking for. He hadn't the remotest doubt, born of his previous observation of her relationships with Mary Winship, Mary Winship's mother, Mrs. Scott Winship, and her nephew, Eric Dalrymple-Hughes, and crystallized by the violence of her present emotion, that she would spoil everything if she knew Dan McGrath had come all the way from America to see Mary again.

"He's really not trying to buy anything at all, Miss Winship."

"I don't believe it." Miss Caroline Winship's heavy lids drooped ominously over her brilliant angry eyes. "He wants something. What is it?"

"Oh, Caroline."

Mr. Pinkerton started and turned quickly around. Mrs. Scott Winship, frail and wan, had come from the adjoining room and was there in the doorway, her worn, quilted dressing-gown huddled about her. Looking at her was like looking at an image of her daughter reflected in a tarnished mildewed mirror in a darkened hallway: all the vitality and youthful loveliness faded and withered by the killing frost of years and dependence.

"Please don't be so cross, Caroline. Perhaps Mr. Pinkerton doesn't know. You really mustn't let yourself get so worked up and irritable."

Caroline Winship had never had her sister's beauty, but she had all the concentrated passion and vitality the other lacked. "I'll deal with this in my own way, Louise," she said shortly. "Go

Continued on next page

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THE MURDERS IN GODOLPHIN SQUARE

Continued from previous page

back to your fire. You'll catch cold in here." She turned to Mr. Pinkerton. "What did that man want?"

"He—he wanted to know if Mr. Winship had ever come back."

Mr. Pinkerton had not intended to say it; it had just popped out of his mouth, somehow, as he saw Mrs. Winship draw her robe more tightly around her frail body and start to obey her sister's command to go back to her room. It had just popped out, and in some terrible and inexplicable fashion the words seemed to hang in the air, as though they had been visibly formed and frozen.

Oh, dear, Mr. Pinkerton thought, with a mute and horrified gasp. What had he done now? It was as if he had by chance stumbled on to a magic formula that turned everything in the room into stone or lifeless clay. The two women were motionless, petrified into speechless silence, life suspended. There was something so ghastly about the whole atmosphere of the room and the unutterable quiet of both the women there that small beads of icy, pricking perspiration broke out all over him.

Then Miss Caroline spoke. "Go to your room, Louise." Her voice was so low and so deathly quiet that Mr. Pinkerton took an involuntary step backward and put his hand out, trying to reach the door.

"Stay where you are, Mr. Pilkington. Don't go. Come over here. Come over and sit down."

MR. PINKERTON was not sure how he did it. He was aware of Louise Winship somehow fading away and the solid white door filling the place where she had stood. He was aware of himself sitting bolt upright on the extreme edge of the chair that Miss Caroline's thick, knotted hand had indicated. And of her hooded brown eyes level with his own, veiled and intent, fixed steadily on him.

"Mr. Pinkerton." Her voice was still low, hardly above a whisper, with none of a whisper's forced or sibilant quality. "Mr. Pinkerton, Scott Winship has not come back. He can't ever come back. Scott Winship is dead. Do you understand that? He's dead. He's been dead for a great many years. He is dead . . . and his name is never mentioned in this house."

Mr. Pinkerton swallowed. He nodded his head mutely. He was shaking so that he couldn't have spoken if he had wanted to. He nodded again. Miss Winship was rising. He rose, too.

"You understand, Mr. Pinkerton?"

Mr. Pinkerton nodded again, hastily. "I do. I—I understand perfectly." He managed to get control of his voice. "And I'm terribly sorry. I—I didn't mean to upset everybody. And it's—it's none of my business anyway, Miss Winship."

Miss Caroline Winship was moving with him towards the door. He retrieved his hat and clutched it tightly in his trembling hands.

"How very correct you are in saying so." She reached out and opened the door for him. "It is no business of yours whatsoever. I hope you'll remember and not forget it. My sister is an invalid. I have no intention of allowing her to be disturbed. I'd be happy if you'd remember that, too. Good afternoon, Mr. Pinkerton."

She closed the door. Mr. Pinkerton's knees were as weak as tepid water. "Oh dear me!" he whispered. "Dear, dear, how dreadful."

He started to close his eyes, and blinked them abruptly open. As he leaned against the wall his vision brought into view a small segment of the staircase and a brush of white across it—Arthur Pegott's white shoulder, his head bent forward to conceal his presence as he slipped down the stairs.

Mr. Pinkerton straightened up, his heart curiously still. Pegott had been listening at the door. But why? What had he hoped to hear that would make him, after waiting in the lower hall, insolently watching Mr. Pinkerton climb the stairs, nip up behind and risk his job by listening? Unless. . . .

Mr. Pinkerton steadied himself and glanced at the solid, ivory-painted door panel. How much had he heard? He listened now himself, to see if Pegott could have heard at all. The sisters would certainly be talking, whether Scott Winship's name was ever mentioned in the house or not.

Miss Caroline Winship's voice was muted but quite distinct. ". . . American must have seen him. That's all I know. You'd better come at once, Sidney. I think he's here. In London."

Mr. Pinkerton heard the faint clink of the bell as the telephone was replaced and the scrape of a chair being pushed back and stopping sharply, as if Miss Caroline Winship had become aware of something. Of him, possibly . . . of his heart pounding against his ribs. For a paralysed fraction of an instant Mr. Pinkerton stood rooted there, unable to move.

Then an indefinable terror gave his feet a sudden power of speed and silence he did not know they could possess, and he was down the stairs and out of the front door into the twilit security of the square with an almost fantastic sense of relief. It died as quickly as it had come as he looked up at the first-floor window and saw Miss Caroline's solid figure looming darkly against the lighted room.

She was holding the curtain to one side, looking down at him, heavy and motionless. She knew he had been listening to her. The same intuitive awareness that had spoken to him from Pegott's stealthy movements on the stairway told him that. He quickened his steps until at the end of the road he found he was almost running and quite out of breath.

There was something frightening about the whole thing that was more frightening because it seemed to have an intensity entirely out of rational bounds.

Mr. Pinkerton stopped to get his breath and his bearings. Scott Winship was not dead, of course; Miss Caroline Winship knew he was not. But it was more than that. Mr. Pinkerton had not believed he was dead for the simple reason that she had been so determined to force him to believe it. At least, Scott Winship was not physically dead. Miss Winship had not said he was physically dead. All she had said was that he was dead, had been dead a long time, and that his name was never mentioned in that house.

There might be nothing so terribly frightening about it, now that he thought it over. Miss Winship belonged, as he himself did, to a generation that could, and frequently did, regard its black-sheep kinsmen as metaphorically dead.

He thought back to her short telephone conversation: ". . . American must have seen him. That's all I know. You'd better come at once, Sidney. I think he's here. In London."

The name "Sidney" seemed familiar to him, and he remembered suddenly the small car that had frequently stood in front of No. 22 Godolphin Square, and of No. 4, and the quiet and rather austere middle-aged man it belonged to, Mr. Sidney Copeland. And Mr. Pinkerton had heard about him, from Betty, the little Welsh chambermaid, when he first came to the flat.

"They have the most frightful rows—

The women were petrified into silence. Mr. Pinkerton almost gasped. What had made him say that?

the sisters, I mean. Miss Caroline wants Mrs. Winship to marry him."

Mr. Pinkerton blinked again. If Scott Winship really was not dead. . . . But it was all coming back to him now, and very clearly: the little Welsh girl, her soiled apron torn and pinned together, leaning on the vacuum, telling him about the romance of the shadowy invalid on the first floor.

"Mr. Copeland's a very nice gentleman, sir. He's been after her ever so long, and I know she likes him. I've heard her laugh when he's there, and she doesn't laugh very often. You'd think she'd marry him, just to get away from her sister. Miss Caroline's got a cruel and wicked tongue, sir. I'd marry if it was me. Then maybe she wouldn't be sick all the time, like she is now. And Miss Caroline Winship's always at her about it. He's her medical man, so it isn't like he was a stranger or a foreigner, is it, sir?"

And now Caroline Winship was telling Mr. Sidney Copeland, whom she had been trying to get her sister to marry, to come at once because she thought her sister's husband was back in London.

Mr. Pinkerton blinked again, in the deepest perplexity. And all because an American, back in London to find a girl he had met on one single occasion, had asked Mr. Pinkerton a civil and quite simple question.

As he sat at a cramped table in a crowded teashop eating his supper, he wished very much that he had kept his mouth shut. And, that not having been effected, he wished very much that he had asked Dan McGrath where he was stopping. He would have liked to explain his own part in the unfortunate turn of events, and as quickly as possible.

He also wanted to warn the young American. Plainly, for one reason or another, the situation ruled out any polite inquiries about Mary Winship's father. And on the other hand. . . .

The wisest thing for him to do was to go home and mind his own affairs. It was a resolution that Mr. Pinkerton had made many times before, and kept at least as long—in this case, until he opened the front door of No. 4 Godolphin Square.

A pile of battered luggage stood by the lift. The top piece was a green fabric army kit with large black initials stencilled on it: "D. J. McG.," and below them in smaller letters was "Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A."

Mr. Pinkerton stopped and blinked, his heart beating a little faster. He was here, then.

The night porter, Mason, was coming along from the lighted window of the small office off which, on the right, was Miss Violet Grimstead's apartment. He opened the lift door and put the florist's box he was carrying on the leather seat.

"More ruddy flowers for 'er. Bring on another one of 'er attacks, poor lady. 'Ay fever's what it is, if you ask me."

Mr. Pinkerton looked at the long green box. "Guillaume's," it had painted in flourishing gold script on the cover, and he could see "Mrs. Scott Winship" written on the white envelope tied with orchid ribbon to the orchid ribbon round the box.

"You'll 'ave to walk up," Mason said. He picked up the fabric kit and dumped it on the lift floor. "It's 'er that's the trouble. I've been 'ere twenty-two years and never 'ad no trouble till she came."

Mr. Pinkerton blinked for an instant, then understood from Mason's morose glance back at the office. All the servants complained about Miss Violet Grimstead, and she about them. That did not matter. And as Mr. Pinkerton always walked up anyway, that made no difference either. But where Dan McGrath—if it was Dan McGrath—was going to sleep did worry him. He knew the flats were all full.

Mason gave the third piece of luggage a heave into the lift. "No vacancies." He raised his voice to imitate Miss Grimstead's coyly ingratiating approach. "'Just give me and Betty a 'and 'ere, Mason. We'll just move out all the trunks and the 'ousekeeper's paraphernalia and make 'im up a bed 'ere in the box room. I'm sure 'e'll be quite comfy till we can do summat better for 'im Monday.' 'And where, Miss Grimstead?' I ask; 'and where?' I'm still asking."

Where indeed? Mr. Pinkerton wondered. But not for long.

Miss Violet Grimstead was smiling happily at him through the narrow office window that guarded the approach to the carpeted stairway like a sentry box in an armed camp. Her bright blonde curls under the overhead light were as brassy but not as toothy as her smile.

"Oh, Mr. Pinkerton! A perfectly charming young American, a Mr. Daniel McGrath, has just arrived. He's gone out for a few hours, but he'll be back tonight. He simply wouldn't take no for an answer."

Her smile fixed itself intently on the little man. "You aren't taking a holiday beginning Monday morning, are you, Mr. Pinkerton? You have looked so seedy lately, the sea air would do wonders for you. I've got a sister in Bournemouth that I could arrange to make you very comfy indeed. I can just transfer your account and you'll be fit again in no time." Miss Grimstead waggled her curls at him, and became at once brisk and efficient. "Monday'll do very nicely. I wouldn't want to hurry you at all. Mr. McGrath can manage very comfortably in the box room till Monday, I'm sure."

"I'm not going on holiday."

Miss Grimstead turned back with a startled jerk of her blonde curls. She was no more startled than Mr. Pinkerton. He stood gaping at her, just as she stood gaping at him, at the idea of hearing himself come out and say what was in his mind.

"I mean—I mean Mr. McGrath's a very good friend of mine, and I'm sure —I'm sure he wouldn't really like——"

"Oh," Miss Grimstead said. "Oh," she repeated. Her pale managerial eyes bored sceptically into his. "He said he had a friend here he wanted to be near. I must say it never occurred to me it was you."

Mr. Pinkerton swallowed. He could see her opinion of Dan McGrath take an abysmal dive. He backed towards the door and hurried up.

In the middle of the second flight, well out of Miss Grimstead's visual range, he stopped to catch his breath, and caught it, in fact, quite literally. The door of Eric Dalrymple-Hughes's small rear flat on the first floor had opened, and a girl's voice came up the stairs.

"Be ready, Eric, won't you?" she was saying. "And stop grousing, darling. I promise you I had nothing at all to do with it. I'm just lucky for once, that's all. And please don't try to spoil it."

It was Mary Winship.

At the sound of her voice the basilisk-eyed Miss Grimstead vanished from Mr. Pinkerton's mind as promptly as if she had never existed, and his face brightened. Mary Winship was the one person at No. 4 Godolphin Square—except, of course, Betty, the little Welsh maid—who ever gave him a friendly smile or spoke to him as though it was a pleasure and not a duty.

He listened to her speaking back through the door to her insufferable cousin. She sounded so gay and excited that Mr. Pinkerton did not for an instant doubt the reason.

She knows he's here, he thought, himself almost as excited because she sounded so happy about it. He could not have been happier himself, even when he heard her cousin's petulant, affected voice answer her.

"I'm not grousing. And don't misunderstand me, Mary. It's not Aunt Caroline personally that I'm objecting to. It's the tyranny of the very old."

"I doubt if she'd like that very much, dear. She's not that old, and if it's tyranny, at least you don't have to put up with it. There are jobs, you know. You don't have to stick here."

Mr. Pinkerton had started down the stairs again. If he pretended he was going out instead of coming in, he could meet her quite casually. But he hesitated now. His device, transparent at best, had become slightly awkward in view of the turn the situation had taken.

"I know you'd like to have me out of the field, even if I am only a *soi-disant* nephew that's got to sing nicely for his supper if he's to get any. It's not my fault my mother was a cousin instead of a stepdaughter like yours. And maybe I shall get out. I'm fed up with fiddling for every kipper I get. I'm on to something that would surprise you. All I want is a bit of ready cash."

"And all I hope is it's nothing that'll get you into trouble again," Mary Winship retorted cheerfully. "But let's not quarrel. I'm much too excited to quarrel with you now. And do be ready. I don't want this spoiled."

As she closed the door, Mr. Pinkerton, in his nervous anxiety to get back up the stairs without being heard, hit a brass rod with the toe of his boot. The sharp metallic clink made Mary Winship turn quickly and glance up.

"Oh, hallo, Mr. Pinkerton." Her face broke into a sunny smile. She took a quick, light step over to the middle of the hall and looked up at him. "Oh, Mr. Pinkerton, the most wonderful thing's happened! You can't ever guess!" Her eyes were dancing, her whole face lighted up. "I can hardly believe it!"

"I—I think it's very nice," Mr. Pinkerton said. He felt a glow of modest

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THE MURDERS IN GODOLPHIN SQUARE

Continued from previous page

pride because he didn't have to guess. He knew. He'd thought Mary Winship was a pretty girl, one of the prettiest he'd ever known—in real life, that is; not, of course, in the films. He also thought she was sweet, an old-fashioned virtue he did not look for in the cinema. At the moment she seemed to be both in an extraordinary degree.

Slender and graceful as an osier wand, she had wide-set, violet-blue eyes fringed with curling dark lashes so long that they would have looked unreal except that her brows were thick and shining and her hair almost blue-black, and curly, too.

"I'm very pleased about it, too," Mr. Pinkerton said. He wished Dan McGrath could see her then.

"Oh, Aunt Caroline told you? I thought she'd just decided. You know, she's really an angel! Just think of it—a whole month in Paris! I knew I was to have a week's holiday, but not a whole month in Paris. But I've got to rush. I'm going on the night boat. Goodbye, Mr. Pinkerton! Take care of yourself! I'll bring you a present!"

She was off, her feet fairly dancing as she waved her hand and ran along the hall to her aunt's apartment, leaving Mr. Pinkerton mute and stricken halfway up the dimly lighted stairs.

Paris. She was going to Paris. She wasn't happy about Dan McGrath. She was happy because she was going to Paris.

SUDDENLY Mr. Pinkerton caught his breath, standing perfectly still. The truth was brilliantly clear all about him. She's not *going* to Paris. They're *sending* her to Paris. To get her away from here. Her aunt's sending her away so she won't see Dan McGrath.

Mr. Pinkerton's own voice was telling him that, but he knew it was not the truth. They were sending her away, but it was not on account of Dan McGrath, but on account of her father. They were sending her so she would not see Scott Winship.

But it was all the same. A month in Paris. Mr. Pinkerton's pallid viscera turned over in agonizing protest. It couldn't be, not after Dan McGrath had come all the way from America. Somebody had got to stop it.

He looked around frantically, as if he hoped by some miraculous dispensation that Dan McGrath would appear out of the murky depths of the cabbage-scented hallway and put a stop to it then and there.

And it was all his fault. If he had never mentioned Scott Winship it would never have happened. And it couldn't happen. It mustn't be allowed to happen.

He blinked his watery grey eyes and swallowed. Then he moistened his lips. It had to be stopped, and he was the one who had to stop it.

"Oh, dear!" Mr. Pinkerton said. It was all very easy to say he had to stop it. The question was how to do it. If only Dan McGrath were there now. . . . He glanced down into the hall. Eric Dalrymple-Hughes was coming out of his flat. He was whistling under his breath, a jaunty, self-satisfied young man, well built and handsome—too handsome for his own good, in Mr. Pinkerton's opinion—and with a weak mouth and petulant voice. He was a frail reed to lean on, but at the moment he was the only reed there was.

Mr. Pinkerton straightened his narrow shoulders and made a pathetic effort to clear his throat and attract Mr. Eric Dalrymple-Hughes's attention as he paused to light a cigarette.

"Mr. Dalrymple-Hughes! Wait a moment, will you, please?" Mr. Pinkerton found his voice. He scurried anxiously down the stairs. Eric Dalrymple-Hughes, his cigarette poised with an air of bored distinction, waited for him, his supercilious brows raised.

"It's—it's about your cousin, Miss Winship! She mustn't go to Paris tonight!" he blurted out breathlessly. "You've got to stop her! She really mustn't go!"

That Eric Dalrymple-Hughes thought he had taken leave of his senses was perfectly apparent, even to Mr. Pinkerton. He did not stare at him precisely, but looked at him as if not quite sure he was actually there.

"And just what business of yours is it whether my cousin goes to Paris or does not go to Paris, Mr.—Mr. Pinkerton, I believe?"

"Yes, I'm Mr. Pinkerton. I live on the third floor. And it's not really any business of mine. But there's an American coming here—to the flats, I mean——"

"An American?" Mr. Eric Dalrymple-Hughes gave a slight start. "I don't understand, I'm afraid," he said briefly.

"I met him in front of your aunt's house this afternoon, and he was looking for your cousin. He didn't know where she lives now, and I told him. He's got a room here—the box room—and he wants to see her. So, you see, she—she mustn't go to Paris just now. Your aunt thinks he knows her father, Mr. Scott Winship, but I'm sure he doesn't at all. He was just asking if he'd come back. And he never said Mr. Winship was here or that he'd seen him. He just asked——"

Mr. Dalrymple-Hughes was examining the tip of his cigarette with studied unconcern. "Why should he be interested in my deceased uncle?"

"Oh, no, no!" cried Mr. Pinkerton. "He's not interested in your uncle. It's your cousin, Mary. He came all the way from America to see her, so she mustn't go off like this. She's simply——"

He stopped. The young man was regarding him with a sceptical, puzzled, half-amused and half-not-amused-at-all eye that was discouraging in the extreme. It was plain that the idea of anyone so much as crossing the road to see his cousin was too bizarre for him to consider seriously. Mr. Pinkerton almost gave up.

"At least let me speak to Mary Winship before she goes. Do that, will you?"

He was so in earnest that he knew he sounded absurd, pleading this way about such an incomprehensible matter, and knowing that pleading would not be enough, he made a sudden desperate gamble.

"You said . . . I heard you tell Mary you needed cash. I can let you have some. I could let you have a hundred pounds . . . or two hundred. If you'll bring Mary up and let me talk to her, I'll give you the money."

It was not only a gamble. For Mr. Evan Pinkerton, who never spent a sixpence without misgivings, or a pound without cold chills, it was more than that; it was fantastic. Eric Dalrymple-Hughes stood looking at him. What he

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"Have you been at the firewater again, Mrs. Gunn?"

was thinking, Mr. Pinkerton had no way of telling. There was nothing on the handsome, conceited young face that had any meaning for him, friendly or unfriendly.

He stood simply staring for an instant, then said quite coolly, "I'll see what I can do," turned on his heel and went back into his own apartment.

Mr. Pinkerton started upstairs. He was not even thinking of the two hundred pounds. He was too numb with a horrible sense of guilt at having ruined Dan McGrath's mission, and of defeat at having failed to make Mary Winship's cousin see the truth.

If only he had kept out of it, Mr. Pinkerton thought again, wretchedly; if only he had let Miss Caroline Winship think it was the Town and Country Planning people, and never mentioned the American. But it was too late now.

Besides being miserable, he was extremely confused. They couldn't be sending Mary Winship away on account of the American they didn't know, so they must be sending her away because they thought her father was coming back or was back already. Was it only her Aunt Caroline, then, or was it her mother, too?

He tried to think back, recalling Mrs. Scott Winship standing stone-still by her door when he repeated the ill-starred question. All he could remember was the sudden clap of silence, and the intense motionlessness of the two sisters, before Miss Caroline said: "Go to your room, Louise." Then there was Miss Winship's telephone call to Sidney Copeland.

Between all that and now—it had been twenty-five minutes past seven when he left the teashop after his meal—they had decided, or Miss Caroline had decided, to send Mary away and had arranged to send her. And she was going on the night boat, unless he could stop her somehow.

He went up to his room on the third floor. It was dark. The curtains had not been drawn, and the two french windows that opened out on to the narrow ledge, forming a sort of balcony behind the parapet made by the stone coping to hide the mansard windows of the attic storey and maintain the even, classical lines of the Adam square, shone softly silver from the outside light. He went across the room and stepped out on to the ledge.

Through the ragged branches of the intervening plane trees he could see the gaunt ruins of Miss Winship's house. The dim orange light from the street lamp threw it into a soft, ghostly relief above the black, empty spaces where the houses had gone from either side of it. Someone was moving along the street in front. Mr. Pinkerton could make out the dark figure of a man moving slowly along. He passed the house, and a moment later he came back. As he stopped again, Mr. Pinkerton had a fleeting impression that there was something familiar in the outline of his body or the movement of it, as if the man was someone he had seen and now somehow recognized, but could not identify.

It was so puzzling that he watched him intently; so intently that he blinked with astonishment when the man was suddenly no longer there. He seemed to have disappeared, quite literally, as if he had dissolved not into the shadows, but as part of them. He had been there, darkly visible; then he was not there, and the space in front of the house and the whole street were empty.

It was as eerie and uncanny as the shadowy ruin of the house itself.

Mr. Pinkerton leaned forward, peering intently through the murky penumbra cast up through the settling haze by the orange overglow of the street lights.

Suddenly he stiffened, every grey fibre of his nervous system quivering. Someone was in the room behind him. Was it the sound of a stealthy breath drawn or expelled. Or was it the slithering sound of a footstep in the dark room across the worn Brussels rug? Or a garment brushing against the chair or the table?

He could not tell, except that it was something, and something furtive and frightening, and it was there, very close, inside the long open window behind him.

He tried to swallow, to clear the sudden pounding in his ears, but his throat was dry. His hands were icy as he tried to grip the stone coping, drawing back so as not to see the street below, paralysed with a fear so horrible that it curdled everything inside him.

When he tried to speak, no sound came past his parched lips, and his cry for help was only a hoarse, choked breath. As he tried to turn and look into the blackness of the room and cry out, he knew nothing more except a hideous, woolly darkness, as something thick and soft flashed over his head and a brutal stranglehold fastened about his throat, thrusting back his chin, as he slid down into a vast, blinding, nauseating abyss, down and down, with the high-pitched echo of something sounding crazily like the hoot of a taxi horn in his ears, before the crash of a thousand lights and the blackness of oblivion.

Mr. Pinkerton slumped down on the lead gutter pipe.

WAIT. The hooting taxi horn stayed the arms of the dark figure standing over Mr. Pinkerton, murderous and intent. Wait. Wait till it passes and the street is empty again. But it was not passing. It was stopping at No. 4 Godolphin Square. The dark figure was motionless, arms reached down to lift the body and cast it over the raised coping.

"He has seemed seedy lately. I advised him to go to the seashore," Miss Violet Grimstead would say with easy tears, when they picked him up from the street and brought him in. "I didn't mean to upset him. I never thought he'd take it seriously and try to harm himself this way."

Hands seized the suffocating rug, thrust it back in its place as the silent feet slipped back through the darkened room and out into the empty hall.

The door closed quietly. No one would come. No one ever came. There would be no one until Pegott brought the breakfast tray in the morning—later than to any other room, because the little grey man did not matter. He would stay there, silent and motionless, until it was safe to return. And in the morning they would find him down in the street.

To be continued next week

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HOME JAMES!

Continued from page 14

dusk, assisted only by the doubtful services of Mrs. Packett's nephew, Tom. Its emerald lawn and glowing cinerarias were the glory of the village. Visitors were wont to peer over the hedges, lost in admiration. But they did not stay long when they caught the baleful eye of the owner.

It was, therefore, understandable that Miss Figg was not consulted with regard to the problem of James Alexis Finnigan.

Distracted and baffled, the committee had assembled once again in Mrs. Porteous's drawing-room to try to find another home for James Finnigan of Wapping.

Mrs. Cooke, of The Gables, had just sent a note which summed up her feelings with admirable succinctness: "This boy is impossible." Before that, Mrs. Tucker, of Russet Cottage, had kept him five days. Farmer Kirton was regarded almost as a hero because he had endured James Finnigan for a month.

"I wonder whether Kirton would take him back?" mused Major Hopwood. "Now that his own children have gone back to school he might have a bit more patience."

"Well, if he refuses, the boy must go back to his parents, that's all," said Mrs. Tucker. "Couldn't we decide *now* to send him back?"

Mrs. Porteous, plump and comfortable, the founder and financial sponsor of the scheme, had said little so far. Now she put in quickly: "I'm afraid we can't send him back. That's out of the question."

"May I ask why?" demanded Major Hopwood.

"I hoped I shouldn't have to tell you that," said Mrs. Porteous. "It's rather shocking. . . . However, you all remember, I'm sure, how the boy was brought to us at Easter by his mother—and how thankful she was that we'd accepted her case? Before she went back to London she took me aside and told me in strict confidence—terrified, I suppose, that we might change our minds—the *real* reason." She sighed and shook her head.

"It appears that her husband, a fireman in a cargo boat, went to sea about fourteen years ago and never came back. The owners told Mrs. Finnigan that he had been paid off in Australia, since when nothing had been heard of him. Knowing his quarrelsome nature, she was inclined to think he'd been killed in a dockside brawl. She mourned him for over a year. Then, having satisfied her conscience in this respect, she took up with a Russian dock labourer. The result of this arrangement was——" Mrs. Porteous paused and coughed discreetly.

"*James Alexis!*" finished Major Hopwood, in the tone of one who suddenly sees the light.

"Precisely. I gathered," Mrs. Porteous went on, "that the association wasn't a very happy one. After a while the Russian dropped out of the picture. James, of course, remained—to grow up with the rest of the family. Three months ago, and fourteen years after Finnigan's disappearance, came a bolt from the blue in the shape of a letter from him. He was on his way home from Australia! He had lost his memory, and instead of returning to his ship he had wandered off into the bush and begun a new life as a lumberjack.

"Mrs. Finnigan was in a dreadful predicament. What on earth was she to do about James Alexis? Her husband, she said, was not the sort of man to make allowances for a lapse of that kind. She said he'd cut her throat. Unless she could get rid of James Alexis she was as good as dead already."

The major said: "Well, what are we going to do? Agreed that we can't, in all humanity, send the boy home. *What* are we going to do with him?"

THE object of this discussion was strolling meanwhile along the footpath known as "The Narrows," on the eastern outskirts of the village.

He scuffed up the dirt with his shoes, his brow furrowed, abstracted. He was thinking. Remembering how, not so long ago, he had wondered idly what it was like in the country. Huh! He knew all right now.

The footpath he was following debouched into a wider, sandy lane between hedges of alder and blackthorn. It was called Cobb's Lane, and led eventually into the village. At the lower end, where James Alexis now stood debating his course, lay the gipsy encampment. It stretched before him, an untidy vista of carts and caravans, rough ponies dragging at their halters, and grimy children. A man sat on an upturned bucket, skinning a rabbit. He scowled blackly. James Alexis scowled back.

There was nothing interesting here, he decided. He went on to the top of Cobb's Lane to have a look at Miss Figg, who was a never-failing source of entertainment.

Ever since the day he had first beheld her clattering up the High Street in her ancient equipage, James Alexis had been fascinated by Miss Figg. Of all the inhabitants of Compton Abbas, she was the only one to arouse in him any stirrings of sympathetic interest.

Miss Figg, however, was most unappreciative of the distinction. Indeed, she had complained to the committee recently about him following her.

The pretty Tudor house lay bathed in sunshine. Borders of delphiniums and antirrhinums made great splashes of colour all round it, setting off the mellowness of oak beams and old brick. Miss Figg was busy with the lupins outside the study window, snipping off the dead flower heads and dropping them tidily into the basket which she carried for the purpose. Her back was turned to the entrance, so she did not see James Alexis approach and hoist himself on to her front gate. The first intimation she received of his presence was a cheerful greeting.

"Wotcher, lidy!"

She spun round, startled and outraged. *That boy again.* Drawing herself up to her full height, she pointed the secateurs at him and commanded fiercely: "Go away!"

A lesser spirit might have been daunted by this reception. But James Finnigan had faced many a tougher proposition than Miss Figg. He made himself comfortable. They considered each other warily, the small Cockney boy and the elderly spinster. The probable reason underlying Miss Figg's particular hatred of small boys was that they laughed at her.

She had inherited many of the late general's physical attributes, as well as his wordly possessions. She had his tall, spare figure, his jutting nose, his truculent eye. She had the same thick iron-grey hair, which she wore piled up on the top of her head and secured by a circular comb. In her dress she affected late Victorian shirt-waists and starched collars. She also wore invariably a long worsted cloak of indeterminate colour but very martial cut. This garment she was given to flinging around her after the fashion of a Roman toga.

BUT James Alexis did not find her comical. On the contrary, he admired her wholeheartedly. Everything about her, especially her masterful handling of the pony-trap in which she dashed about the village, inspired him to greater loyalty and respect. For although the trap was as venerable as the rest of her heritage, the chestnut pony was young and thoroughbred and took some handling.

James Alexis had long cherished the desire to become a jockey. He had mixed much with the seedier members of the fraternity and picked up from them a good deal of "form." He knew a "good 'un" when he saw it; and he took an odd, vicarious pleasure in the obvious merits of Miss Figg's smart pony. . . .

Meanwhile, that lady was feeling somewhat perplexed by the attitude of the small grubby figure perched on her gate. He did not laugh; he did not quail under her fierce regard, and he showed no signs of departing.

Before she could think of a suitable admonishment, Tom Packett came round the corner of the house, looking highly agitated.

"It's them gippos, ma'am. They're at the currants again."

"The thieving wretches!" exclaimed Miss Figg, and swept off to do battle. Tom Packett followed in her wake, seizing a long-handled besom as he passed the toolshed door.

James Alexis slipped down off the gate and trailed along behind them.

The public footpath that cut across Miss Figg's domain ran at one point inconveniently close to her kitchen garden. Along the bank that overhung the pathway at this point grew her choicest currant bushes. It was easy to straddle the bank, claw hold of the branches with a crooked stick and despoil them of their fruit. This was what was going on when the trio arrived. A gipsy youth with a fierce dark face was stripping the bushes while two slatternly women waited below on the footpath, muttering encouragement.

MISS FIGG bore down upon the marauder, cloak flapping in the breeze. "Rascal!" she cried. "Be off with you at once."

The youth stuck his head forward belligerently, muttering imprecations in Romany. Miss Figg retreated slightly. Tom Packett fumbled with the besom in nervous indecision.

"I shall report you to the magistrates," Miss Figg announced bravely. "You have been caught red-handed in the act of committing a trespass and a felony."

"That's right," said Tom.

At this the two women burst into raucous laughter. The youth deliberately stretched out his hand and broke off a loaded spray of berries from the nearest bush. As he did so he fixed his glittering black eyes on his accusers in a long evil stare.

Miss Figg and her henchman fell silent. The fear of the gipsy, inborn in so many country folk, was upon them. There was a pause, fraught with tension and drama.

Into this silence fell the impatient tones of James Alexis Finnigan, whose presence had hitherto been completely overlooked.

"Nah then," he said briskly, "'op it, me lad!"

The gipsy transferred his gaze in some surprise to the small truculent figure that detached itself from somewhere behind Miss Figg's cloak and advanced upon him, unafraid. His eyes narrowed again malevolently. But they had no effect upon James. "No savvy, eh?" he said. "Blimey, I'll show yer!"

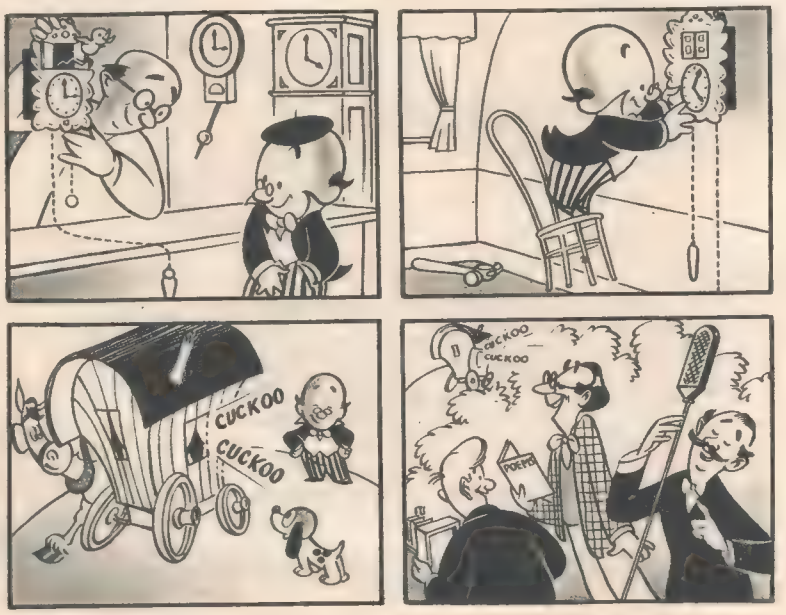
James Alexis was little more than half as tall as the gipsy, but he was wise in the ancient art of street fighting. Up came his knee and made contact with his victim's stomach. The gipsy howled and toppled off the bank into the lane. The two women scuttled away from beneath him with cries of alarm, and he picked himself up, shaking his fist, his face twisted with fury.

James Alexis jeered at him from above, triumphantly contemptuous. "Garn! Go 'ome and wash yerself!"

This stirring encounter marked the opening of a new phase in the lives of all concerned.

Much as she resented it, Miss Figg was compelled to acknowledge her obligation to her new champion. Eyeing him with distaste, but forcing her voice into tones of amiability,

MR. DIMPLE *by David Hand*



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HOME JAMES!

Continued from previous page

she said: "You are to go round to the back door and ask Mrs. Packett to give you a piece of cake."

James departed with alacrity.

After this it seemed natural that James should constitute himself unofficial watchdog, sentinel and bodyguard to Miss Figg and all her possessions. He had proved his prowess, and he had plenty of opportunity to exercise it.

Systematically the gipsies now embarked on a vendetta of pilfering and annoyance. Mostly they were foiled at the outset by the sudden appearance of James Finnigan from out of the toolshed or behind the water butt. The sight of his sharp, determined face, accompanied by a stream of ferocious language, unfailingly put them to flight.

Miss Figg would have sought aid from the police, but she was well aware that to invoke the law on the Romany is to court disaster.

It was only later, after the loss of the cockerels, that indignation drove her to act against her better judgment and report the affair to Sergeant Bindle.

James, of course, was enjoying himself enormously. He realized that his presence in Miss Figg's domain was far from welcome, but the fact that it was tolerated at all brought him immense satisfaction.

Reconsigned by the committee to the care of Farmer Kirton, he had more leisure than hitherto to devote to his self-appointed task. Farmer Kirton fed and housed him, but directly after breakfast, James skipped off to Cobb's Lane. He fetched and carried tools for Tom Packett, did a bit of well-meant but inefficient weeding, helped to feed the chickens and groom the pony.

THE fowl-house raid took place in early July. It was about nine o'clock in the evening, when Tom went to lock up the fowls, that he discovered the loss of the two Rhode Island cockerels which were being fattened for the table. He also discovered footprints, and tracked them into Cobb's Lane and thence to the encampment near The Narrows. The light was going, but even so he found a few unmistakable reddish-brown feathers.

Armed with adequate proof and abundant indignation, Miss Figg next morning decided to call in the police.

"Tom," she called, after the manner of Boadicea summoning her quadriga, "harness the pony. I am going to Sergeant Bindle."

James had been hovering around uneasily, warned by some instinct of caution. He said: "It won't do yer no good. Them gippos is slippery gentry for a rozzer to catch."

Miss Figg bent her stern gaze upon him. "Finnigan, do not interfere in matters that don't concern you. Run and help Tom with the trap."

The pony, whose name was Hugo, was sleek and spirited after a day's idleness. His golden coat shone in the sun. Lovingly, James adjusted the crupper strap and threaded the long reins through the terrets. When Miss Figg shook the reins and clattered off, James stuck his hands into his pockets and shook his head in gloomy foreboding.

The trouble that James Alexis saw impending did not come for some days. In fact, the consensus of opinion regarding Miss Figg's indictment of the gipsies was that it had done a great deal of good. Major Hopwood joyfully seized his opportunity, convened a meeting of the local magistrates and finally ordered the gipsies to quit the village within forty-eight hours.

The tribe waited till nightfall of the second day of the ultimatum. At dusk they were to be seen seated around their cooking fires as usual, apparently unconcerned and unprepared for the coming exodus. At dawn they were gone. So, too, was the pony Hugo from his stall at the house in Cobb's Lane.

Miss Figg was inconsolable, and the village in a ferment. Sergeant Bindle went pedalling out into the Dorset lanes to overtake the gipsy caravans and examine their livestock in the name of the law. He returned, baffled and bewildered.

"There bain't a sign of him, marm," he reported to Miss Figg. "Them gippos had a score of ponies with 'em, but nary a chestnut among 'em. Mebbe they bain't the guilty parties, after all."

"Garn!" put in James Alexis, who as usual was hanging about within earshot. "*Course* they done it, the perishers!"

"Finnigan," said Miss Figg severely, "your opinion was not invited. Go and help Tom net the loganberries. Or, better still, go back to Farmer Kirton and try to make yourself useful to *him*. This is no place for little boys."

It is a tribute to James's magnanimity that he did not treat this last remark as a mortal insult, nor as an expression of base ingratitude. He wandered off disconsolately into the garden, past the loganberry canes, from which he helped himself abstractedly, past the greenhouse, from which he selected half a dozen of the ripest tomatoes, till he came to the empty stable. The green-painted half-door swung open as usual, but it no longer revealed Hugo's velvet nose poked out to receive his caresses. This time there was nothing but a dark void.

James Alexis clenched his fists.

That night he, too, disappeared.

MISS FIGG was, strangely enough, even more upset about this than she had been over the loss of the pony.

"Perhaps," she said, a little awkwardly to Mrs. Packett, "perhaps I did speak rather harshly to him. I didn't know he was so sensitive."

James was missing for five days. After the surrounding woods had been combed and the ponds dragged he reappeared on Saturday morning, toiling up the village street in a pitiable state.

His clothes were torn and muddy, his face peaked with exhaustion. He was leading by means of a hackamore bridle a weary-looking brown pony. Without a word to anyone or a glance to right or left, he plodded through the village to the house in Cobb's Lane.

Miss Figg was tying up her delphiniums when she heard the clatter of horse hooves at the gate. She spun round, dropping the ball of twine in astonishment at the sight of the two dejected figures, strange pony and dishevelled little boy. She said: "Good gracious, Finnigan."

James raised a stony face.

"I followed them gippos to Dorchester."

"But — that's twenty miles away!"

"Cor, is that all? Seemed more like a 'undred. Anyway, I caught 'em up and took a dekko at their 'osses, and the copper was dead right. They 'adn't got Hugo. So I swiped this one for yer."

"You *what?*"

"Pinched it. Just snitched 'im."

"You don't mean to say you *stole* this pony from the gipsies?"

"Yes'm. Best I could do. And now, could I 'ave a cup o' tea, or somethink? I'm that thirsty."

Miss Figg stared in consternation. Her mouth opened for a fresh outburst. But none came. Gradually her stern old face softened. Then she began to do several things at once. She tied the pony's bridle to the gate, shouted for Tom, and swept James Alexis off to the ministrations of Mrs. Packett.

"Give him plenty of hot milk and bread and butter. He doesn't look at though he's eaten for days."

Miss Figg herself bathed his blistered feet. As she did so, she scolded him severely. "Two wrongs don't make a right. You've only made matters worse by stealing the pony—to say nothing of worrying us to death by disappearing like that. We shall have to go and see Major Hopwood. He's a Justice of the Peace, and he will know what to do."

Meanwhile, Tom Packett was feeding the brown pony and harnessing it to the trap. By the time James's tender toes had been anointed and bandaged, the equipage was waiting outside the front door.

"Come along," commanded Miss Figg. "We must catch the major before he sits down to lunch."

"You'll have to hurry, Mum," Tom warned her. "Looks as though it be coming on to rain hard."

And indeed the sky had grown suddenly dark and overcast. As James and Miss Figg climbed into

Continued on page 38

NOW YOU KNOW

TO arrive late at the butcher's in these days is to ask for trouble. The left-overs—those sad bits of meat tied up with string—not only look tough but generally are. Still the Sunday joint can be rescued—if you try "slow" roasting.

Instead of cooking the meat at the usual high temperature, try cooking it longer at a lower temperature. You'll find there will be less shrinkage. The reason? Tough tissues of the meat are better broken down by a steady, low temperature. But one warning. Roast potatoes may not brown if cooked with the joint. However, if your oven is one that gets hotter at the top than the bottom, they can still be cooked at the same time.

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Soon Johnny will be setting off on his second journey to a "Bulleteer's" home—to present a big surprise gift and offer a friendly paw to the winner of this week's £500 for the best *Bullet*. That reader, to whom JOHN BULL's telegram goes on the Thursday before Easter, can be *you*!

Left, winner R. E. Baker—right, a rugged member of the *Bullets* staff who joined us as a pup and now weighs over 55 lb.

During 1949 Johnny greeted dozens of *Bullets* guests in London and winners of Swiss Holidays. They all loved him—who wouldn't?

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RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s, if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests in *Bulletin* and *Gazette* dated April 15 and in JOHN BULL dated April 22, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

FIRST "Bullets" SWISS HOLIDAY OFFER NEXT WEEK!

Look out, too, for another fine prize-list in *Bulletin* dated April 8—apply on coupon below.

Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

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Enemy Of Democracy
To Help Everybody
Clever Man
Game Of Grab
New Member
Teaching
Made Or Marred
In Her Way
Visiting Our Village
All Alike
Bitter Pill
At The End Of It
A Nice Change
Auntie's Lawyer
Going Begging
Anxiously
Got It Badly
Pulled Up
Thanks To Dick Barton

Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

.....Of Industry
Found In The.....
Whatever.....Says
Cheap .....
Deputizing For.....
The.....Burst And

NOTE.—You may enclose *Bullets* and Xword entries in same envelope covered by single P.O. for combined entry-fee. Mark envelope "COMBINED," top left-hand corner.

POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 1,724 (or Xword 676), "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

"Bullets" Winners 1,719

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One for each 2nd Runner-up

Clues Across XWORD 676

1. Having luxury loving wife means hubby does this and pays
5. It may be unsound to judge a man's character from what you know of his
7. Farmer may occasionally have to dig one up laboriously
9. We should always remember this of the Nazi war criminals
10. Dusty old second-hand suit could quite well make a good one
13. The cavalry has made many of these
14. Person doing this can't afford to make a single mistake

Down Clues

1. Young minister given more important political post sometimes appears suddenly to put on this
2. A domestic can help her mistress quite a lot if she can be trusted to
3. Steep one makes settlement difficult
4. You'll probably regret giving a dog his this
6. Professional man of high standing may find he can put these up and not work so hard
8. Sometimes makes a heap in very little time
11. These are things to be put down
12. Parrot often gives one

2 BIG CHEQUES WON XWORD 671

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 1. Facts. 3, Work. 4, Tract. 5, Plant. 7, Lag. 12, Sale. 13, Ruse. DOWN: 1, Flop, 2, Creates. 3, Warp. 6, Ton. 8, Greed. 9, Spoof. 10, Cafes or Cares. 11, East.

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Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated April 8.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature indicates agreement to Rules.

1S	I	G		2S			3		4			
I	C	E				5	I	6F	E			
		7R	O	O			L	E	A			
E	8S	T	O	P		F	L	E	D			
			Z			L						
9	A	T	E		10	U	Y		11			
	G	O		J			E	R	A			
12		R	I	O	T		G	E	T			
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CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
No.		6d.
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Puzzle and Form strictly copyright **676** Closing Postmark Monday, March 27

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HOME JAMES!

Continued from page 36

the trap, the first large drops fell.

The brown pony responded with alacrity to Miss Figg's touch on the reins. It had evidently been well broken to harness.

"Seems a pity, don't it?" James ventured. "Giving 'im back, after I brung 'im all them miles."

"Major Hopwood will do what is right."

There was a pause, while they trundled along the lane. Then James began again, somewhat anxiously: "Arter he's sent back the nag, will he send *me* back to the farm?"

"If Mr. Kirton will have you. Which I doubt."

"So do I. I bet he ain't 'alf mad at me. But where else can I go? Don't let 'em send me back to Wapping, miss, or my pa won't 'alf give me a bashing."

Miss Figg said nothing. In the silence that ensued, the rain seemed to gather sudden momentum. In the space of a few seconds it changed from a spattering shower to a violent downpour. The sandy surface of the lane became a chain of puddles and rivulets. The floor of the trap was awash. James's wild hair was plastered down over his ears, and Miss Figg's straw hat wilted visibly. Harder and harder it rained. Not even this, however, roused James Alexis from the apathy into which he had fallen. He sat huddled in his corner, his hands clasped over his knees.

It was not till he had heard his companion give a gasp that he roused himself, to behold Miss Figg leaning forward with an expression of incredulous amazement. Her eyes seemed riveted on the pony's rump.

He said: "Blimey!"

ALONG the pony's back and sides were channels made by the rivulets of water that poured off him. And in contrast to the indeterminate brown of his coat were revealed streaks of vivid chestnut.

Miss Figg reined in. She clambered out of the trap and ran to the pony's head. She tugged off her scarf and began scrubbing energetically at the pigment staining that familiar golden coat, as she did so calling softly: "Hugo, Hugo—it's Hugo."

There was no doubt now. His mane had been hogged and his flowing tail cut to within an inch of the dock—but it was Hugo. *Hugo*—after all! James was stunned. For once in his life he was quite speechless and could do nothing but sit and stare.

There must have been something in his expression that Miss Figg mistook for smugness. She said slowly: "I believe you *knew* all the time, you mischievous boy."

James gulped, controlling his feelings with an effort. His small sharp features brightened into their habitual expression of alertness.

"Course I did!"

"Well, well, well," chuckled Miss Figg. She climbed back into the trap and began to turn the pony round, clucking to it in familiar fashion. The rain poured down her weatherbeaten cheeks and dripped off the end of her nose. Her hat was a ruin, but she beamed upon the sodden world in general.

"Where are we goin' now?" James inquired anxiously.

To his surprise, Miss Figg handed the reins over to him and settled herself in the opposite seat. Her hand rested for a moment on his shoulder. She said imperiously: "*Home, James!*"

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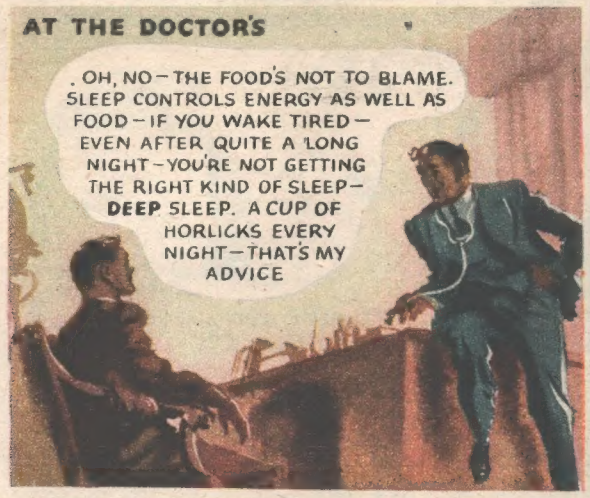
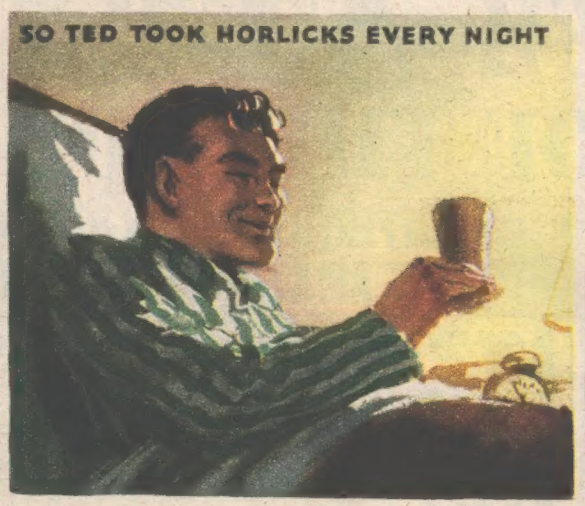
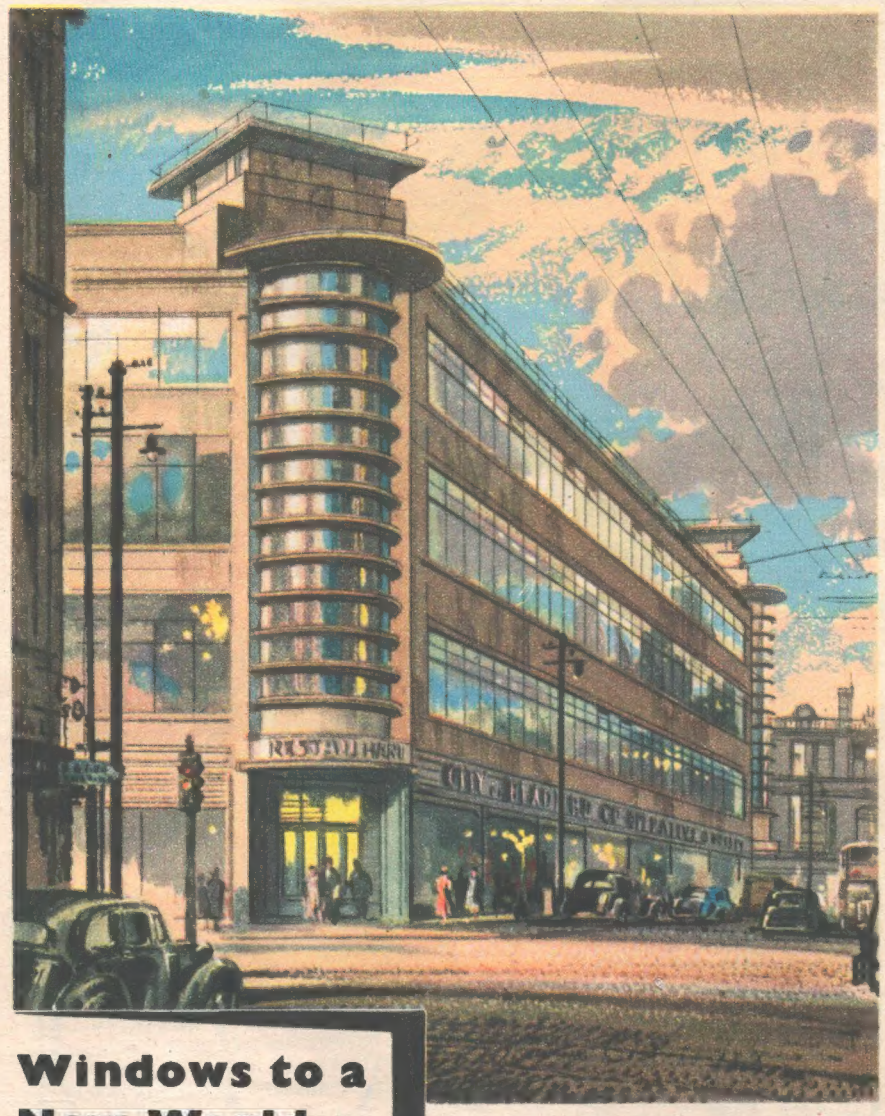




YES, WE'RE HEADING FOR THE BRIGHT LIGHTS FAST. BUT AFTER THAT TALENT CONCERT FLOP I NEVER THOUGHT WE'D MAKE IT! IT WAS MY FAULT, BUT IT WAS THAT AWFUL TIREDNESS. I EVEN WOKE TIRED — AFTER A NIGHT'S SLEEP. PETE SAID IT WAS THE DULL FOOD, BUT THE DOCTOR SAID NO. ENERGY IS CONTROLLED BY SLEEP AS WELL AS BY FOOD — I WASN'T GETTING **DEEP** SLEEP, HE SAID. I TOOK HORLICKS, LIKE HE SAID, AND, GOSH — THE DIFFERENCE NOW! NO FOOLIN, YOU OUGHT TO TRY HORLICKS, TOO. IT'S SMASHING STUFF!

HORLICKS



The City of Bradford Co-operative Society's emporium, drawn for the C.W.S by Rowland Hilder, R.I.

Windows to a New World

The last guns had thundered before Sebastopol, and the Crimean War come to its inglorious end, only four years before the first of the seven Co-operative Societies which today, through successive amalgamations, form the City of Bradford Society opened its first shop on September 22nd, 1860.

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